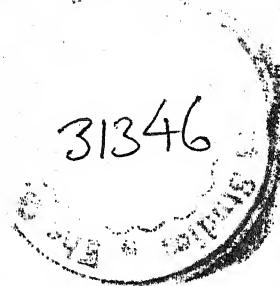


PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM

Sponsored by

**MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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NEW DELHI**

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PREFACE

SINCE independence, various initiatives have been undertaken for improving the socio-economic conditions and empowering women India. In this context, the constitution guarantees socio-economic, cultural and political equality and the provision of providing equal rights for availing different opportunities to all social groups of population, especially men and women. Increasing emphasis has also been provided for initiating variety of development schemes and welfare programmes with maximising the participation of women in different activities during the past plans. At the policy level, various legal reforms and resolutions in the form of social Acts have also been introduced to improve the social status and empowerment of women in the Indian social system. However, little progress has been visualised in the participation of women in different activities, rural development programmes and availing various opportunities in the past due to prevailing certain social evils and cultural backwards of rural systems which have been restricting women to participate in certain out-door activities and to get the opportunities of bringing improvements in their status.

Recognising the unsatisfactory progress that has achieved in improving the socio-economic status of women in the past it has increasingly been felt desirable that involving rural women with any political system and ensuring their participation in the activities of such institutions, including in matters related to certain decision making process, would be an instrumental measure for improving the socio-economic status and empowerment of women. In view of these assumptions, the introduction of reservation policy for favour of women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions has therefore, been an important Government intervention for maximising the participation of women in different activities at village Panchayat levels and as a result to improve their socio-economic status.

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In this light the present study has attempted to examine various issues related to the implementation pattern of reservation policy and its awareness among rural women, nature of socio-economic status of elected women, extent of participation of women Pradhans and members in different activities of Block and village Panchayats and in different stages of the implementation of development programmes and welfare activities, and the extent of improvements that have occurred in their socio-economic status and empowerment after elected as the representatives of PRIs.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: STATUS OF WOMEN AND THE PRESENT STUDY

IN INDIA, women have been deprived from availing various kinds of opportunities and advantages by our traditional society for the past several centuries. Discrimination against women are commonly observed in providing the opportunities of socio-economic development, participation in different activities, and development programmes and availing the opportunities of various facilities, which are directly or indirectly linked with bringing improvements in the life style and the quality of life, because of prevailing several social and cultural backwardness. Besides this, women are also denied the rights in the decision making process of their family affairs on account of several social and cultural constraints imposed by their family and the continuation of traditional system of the society. Restrictions are also imposed in the participation of women in certain social and cultural programmes and even moving outside the households for certain purposes. Due to these underlined problems imposed by our traditional form of society against women their participation in different economic activities, education, employment, political system etc. has remained very poor even after over a half century of independence. The socio-economic conditions of women in rural areas have been found even more serious and dissatisfactory than in urban areas on account of the prevalence of backward traditional social and cultural system of the society. The traditional form of society has a distinct male bias while the women are generally marginalised. In fact,

the women are seriously exploited by men for certain purposes although most household related activities are only performed by women in the rural areas.

Similarly, disadvantages in employment and other activities linked with the betterment of life are commonly observed in the case of women on account of the socio-cultural constraints imposed by their family and discrimination practiced by the employers. At the same time, restrictions imposed on women in utilising their rights independently and social compulsions to make movements even for certain distances are further imposing limitations in availing the opportunities of gainful employment of women. In addition to this, the discrimination against women in employment which is largely practiced as a result of social values, tend to place women in a secondary position and under the subjugation of men. Therefore, inspite of attaining equality in the level of education and productive efficiency for performing different economic activities it is observed that the employers practice a discriminatory behaviour against women and prefer men for employment.

STATUS OF WOMEN DURING PRE-INDEPENDENCE

Women had a very respectable position and were awarded an honoured place in the prevailing social system during the Vedic period, which directly helped them in improving their social status and to maintain their overall social dignity in India. It was not possible to perform or initiate any kind of social and cultural function and ceremony without the active involvement of women along with their male counterparts. They enjoyed considerable freedom in choosing their mates, participating in different social, cultural, religious, public functions and related

activities. The role of women in performing household related activities with their male family members was quite appreciable and was accepted as a foremost custom of different castes and religious communities. Thus, the wife was the husband's companion in weal and woe, mistress of the households and an active partner in all activities - temporal or spiritual (Shastry 1960). They had the full freedom to attend and make visit in social gatherings and public places. Even they were provided the freedom of undertaking inter-caste marriages, though the concerned practice was well prevalent among the Brahmins, Shyatriya and Vaishya communities (Pandey 1990). The men and women family members had equal responsibilities and duties in successfully performing various social and economic activities, and matters related to household affairs which had provided ample opportunity to women in bringing significant improvements in their social status within and outside their households (Maxmumullar 1940)

After 500 B.C. inequality in finding opportunity in regard to participate in certain social, cultural, religious, economic and matters related to family affairs and activities was generally reflected among women belonging to different castes and social groups rather than among men and women. The upper caste women had the higher privilege and greater opportunity to avail education as compared to lower caste women which in tern had provided additional chances to former groups of women in improving their social status and attaining honoured place in the social and religious functions at the level of different forums and playing an important role along with their male counterpart at the household level activities. The upper caste women were better educated and were married at latter ages. Also, divorce and widow marriage were acceptable to this community (Altekar 1962) (Paul 1964).

However, with the sudden changes in the political, social and economic pattern of the country, the position and status of women started gradually deteriorating mainly during post *Vedic* period. Since the concessional and religious parity was denied to women and the re-marriage of widows was forbidden to those of high strata families. Gradually changing social system also deprived them in availing the opportunities of education, participation in out-door social and cultural activities. Discrimination against women also started in the distribution of parental property and wealth, though they had equal rights in the property of their father in the absence of any son in the family. Again, with the emergence of some hard-core clergymen on the scene of social and cultural matters the women had not only started receiving bad treatment but they were equally denied the rights on the property of their father and husband (Sahai 1992). Rights of property to a widow were also not accepted. However, the women had the sole rights on the property, which they receive at the time of marriage from their parents, but they were not given any rights over the spending of this wealth and property. Ortner (1974) pointed out that the women were everywhere devaluated in relation to men and such devaluation was linked to an universal association of women with inferior nature in contrast to the association of men with superior culture.

During the medieval period the women were deprived of different social and economic rights and were brought out under the overall control of their male family members. They became the victims of various social evils such as Sati Pratha, Child marriage, Pardhah Pratha, Prostitution, girls killings etc. Discrimination against the participation of women, particularly among higher castes, in social

functions and economic activities had reached an alarming stage. Therefore, the economic dependency of women on their father and brother increased largely. This was the period during 712 AD when Turks entered in India. The indigenous socio-economic structure started adversely effecting and women were prevented from availing the opportunities of education, participating in economic activities and realising their property rights. This further strengthened the economic and survival dependency of women over the men.

The birth of social dualism among the Muslims and Hindu Communities had also introduced as the consequences of developing negative attitude of powerful and dominant Muslims over the prevailing social and cultural setting of Hindu Communities. The elite Muslims started force marriages with Hindu girls by converting them to Islam (Pandey 1985). Development of many evils social customs and social practices, such as keeping women in seclusion, *Pardah* system and to keep women out of the site of Muslims traitors was also more deeply strengthened during this period. A clear cut division of women according to caste and socio-economic status came into existence with developing of Pardah system as a custom for higher classes. The low caste women who did not observed Pardah, had to expose themselves before the exterior hazard of the society. Also the evil custom of early marriage started for both Hindu as well as Muslim community girls (Pandey 1990). In this manner, the honoured place which the women had been occupying in the prevailing social and cultural system during the Vedic period had received a greater set back initially during post Vedic period and latter with the entrance of foreign rulers in India, particularly Mughals. The women became the victims of several social evils and were seriously exploited in every aspects.

Women expected little hope about the possibility of getting favourable changes in their socio-economic status, freedom to get the opportunities of availing education and to participate in certain out-door activities during the thirteenth and sixteenth century, when the Saints had organised a nationwide movement in India against the unjust social practices which adopted by the Muslims ruler over the women. The Saint movement emphasised for providing equality among men and women on certain matters. The movement received great popularity throughout the country with the active participation of people of different castes and religions. However, due to the increasing involvement and domination of higher castes the movement could not be successful and continued injustice against women in all aspects.

Further, during the initial period of British rule in India the women were also denied the benefits of education, and were brought out under the authorisation of atmosphere having no opportunities to develop their natural capabilities, became helpless, illiterate narrow minded and peevish (Altekar 1953). Similarly, Shastry (1959) pointed out that during this period the women were still forced to child marriage, the exposure of female children by throwing them at the junction of the Ganga and Sea, the violence used to make women to 'follow the Sati Rule. Even the poorly developed social and cultural elements were restricting the high caste women to participate in their family business and agricultural activities in rural areas. They were limited to perform only household related indoor activities such as cooking food, washing clothes and to look after their children, old family members and animals. The condition of widows was rather poor. Since the society had restricted them to participate in social functions and ceremonies. Even in a situation

of non-availability of any earning male member in the family they were lacking the opportunity to engage with any economic activity and to earn for their livings. The widows were still deprived of property rights throughout the British Rule. In fact the British Government had introduced an important Act in 1937 providing the property rights to widow's over the property of their husband. But the overall prevailing social system and conservative religious outlook of people during the British rule has always been biased against women and favoured men in availing certain facilities and opportunities. As result, at certain extent the men population had also been responsible in deteriorating the socio-economic status of women. All social evils and cultural backwardness developed during the post vedic period against women were latter strengthened during the British rule in India which had further deteriorated the socio-economic status and original positions of women (Sengupta 1960).

However, during the late nineteenth century various social organisations emerged focussing towards reforms of women. The Indian National Congress also attempted to focus on bringing favourable changes in the socio-economic status of women beginning from its formation in 1885. The participation of women was well visualised in the different activities of movement mainly while focussing issues related to the suffering and deteriorating socio-economic condition of women in the prevailing social system. Both men and women had equally raised certain slogans from different forums against the lacking interest and efforts from the part of the British Government to meet the challenges of prevailing social evils which were unabling women to bring changes in their socio-economic status.

As a result of increasing association of women with the national movements and the activities of various social organisations they started realising and became conscious about their strength, work, true place at home and in the society. Consequently, the voices of women came forward with the demand to ensure her equal sharing with men in both private and Public spheres of life. Thus, the women's movement was the expression of the instinctive desire to rise to full liberty of sour, to the fullest development as human being (Kaur 1946). The direct implications of movements initiated this period was witnessed in terms of increased enrolments and literacy among women during early periods of independence. The gap between male-female literacy declined from 20.5 per cent to 17.0 per cent between 1941 and 1951.

INITIATIVES DURING POST INDEPENDENCE

After independence, various initiatives have been undertaken for bringing improvements in the socio-economic status and empowerment of women. Provisions were made in the Indian constitution to provide equal rights and opportunities of socio-economic development and betterment of living for men and women; including different disadvantaged segment of population so as to establish an egalitarian and prosperous society. The constitution also guarantees freedom to speech, personnel liberty to participate in every kind of welfare, social, economic and political activities to all Indian Citizens. The constitution in its article 14, ensures equality before law and article 15 prohibits any discrimination practices., Article 15 (3) empowers states for making special provisions for favour of women and children,

Article 16 (1) guarantees equalities in matters relating to employment and appointment to any public office for all the citizens and Article 16 (2) for bids discrimination practices on account of religion, sex, dissent, place of birth, residence or any of them in providing employment under any Government or public department is concerned.

In view of bringing improvements in the socio-economic condition of women provisions have also been made to maximise the participation of women in different levels of education, with the notion that education is the most important instrument to bring awareness about their rights, duties, social standing and as a prime element to maximise their participation in different categories of remunerative employment etc. This goal of increasing participation in different educational systems was sought to be achieved by planning for introducing subsidised educational facilities, expansion of girls educational institutions on a priority basis, developing educational curriculum according to the need and requirement of girls, providing increasing emphasis on the recruitment of women teachers and making easy access to various basic required facilities at school level.

The Directive Principle of State Policy enshrined in the constitution has a special bearing on the status and empowerment of women. The constitution guarantees political equality to women through the provision of adult franchise. This recognition was certainly a radical departure from socio-cultural norms of traditional Indian society. In addition to this, the state policy in its Article 38 also directs to states to ensure justice, socio-economic and political order and to speed up and guarantee about the welfare of the people. Similarly Article 39, directly

focusses on ensuring equality among men and women in providing opportunities of employment and livelihood, equal pay for similar category of work and protection of every segment of workforce for health related facilities. In all, our constitution has provided increasing initiatives for minimising the discriminatory practices which were deeply developed before independence against women and other socially disadvantaged communities. In this manner these were the initial initiatives as brought out in the form of constitutional measures approaching towards radical departure from the widespreadly persisting socio-cultural backwardness and social evils disfavoring women's interests for past several centuries of foreigners rule in India.

Further, in view of providing a concrete and actual shape to the initiatives and measures underlined in the constitutional provisions for social and economic upliftment of women the economic development planning introduced in 1951 had also initiated several schemes and Programmes for the development and improving the socio-economic status of women. Greater emphasis has also been provided towards the expansion of various social services, such as the facilities of health, education and certain basic amenities of life at accessible distances for the people living in different backward and remote areas, with the expectations that different communities and groups of people would be in a position to avail these facilities at equitable manner, since the very beginning of the introduction of First Five Plan in India.

Considering the Universal fact into account that the improvements in the social status of women cannot be easily brought out without bringing at least some

changes in their economic conditions, various development programmes and schemes have also been introduced, specifically for women, in the various plans during the past. Efforts have also been made to maximise the participation of women both in these women specific programmes as well as in general community development programmes. For the first time a chapter on 'Women and Development' was included in the Sixth Five Year Plan, introducing several women specific and related development projects which were mooted important for improving the economic conditions of rural women. Under the National Perspective plan for women provision was made to maximise the participation of women in ongoing Integrated Rural Development Programmes and other programmes introduced at providing self-employment opportunities. During Seventh Plan, the Indira Mahila Yojana was introduced and a Rastriya Mahila Kosh established to encourage women to hold their own savings accounts and funds for productive activities.

Further, in 1982, the Government had introduced a new development programme as DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in rural Areas) under the IRDP for encouraging the direct and maximum participation of women in different economic activities. The objective of this scheme was also to bring improvements in the survival of young children (below 6 years) and women belonging to age groups of 14 to 45 years and the quality of their lives. The women living below the poverty line were provided the financial subsidy from the DRDA for the purpose of purchasing productive assets under this programme. With the consideration that the collective efforts of women in the successfully functioning of the identified activities for this

programme would be more effective measures, the groups of women consisting 15 to 20 individual members were formed in different villages to run the activity.

Latter, in 1986-87, Women's Development Corporation was formed. The main objectives of the corporation were to work as catalytic agent for creating sustainable income generating activities, to promote variety of schemes and programmes for women and women's groups of weaker sections of society, identification of women entrepreneurs, preparation of development projects, providing technical guidelines and services, making access to credit facilities, arrangements for initiating training facilities in different subjects of trade and service and finally to act as a facilitator in promoting and strengthening different women's co-operative societies.

In 1976, the Government promulgated an Equal Remuneration Act, which emphasised that the duty of employer would be to pay equal remuneration to men and women workers for performing same or similar nature of work. According to this Act, no discrimination would be practiced at the recruitment on the ground of sex among women and men labourforce. However, this act covers only employment which is provided under the public sector companies and banks, Central and State Governments, Corporations, mines, coal and oilfields and major ports. During this period, Bureau of women was also established by the Ministry of Social Welfare for assessing the problems of women and to suggest recommendations for solving these problems. In 1978, the Planning Commission had also constituted a working group for assessing the emerging employment situation of women and to provide suitable recommendations for their employment perspectives. The suggested recommendations of these groups were well considered in the Sixth Plan and, as a

result, various women specific development schemes were introduced during this plan period. During the women decade, the women were promised for introducing various development schemes and reforms at policy level so that the socio-economic status of women could be improved significantly.

The Government had also framed various social legislation and passed several Acts in the past for raising the legal and social status of women. The major reforms in this direction were, Special Marriage Act, 1954, The Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, The Hindu Succession Act 1955. The Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956, The Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act 1956, Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971, the Comprehensive Family Court Act, 1984, Maternity Benefit Act etc.

OUTCOME OF THE PAST EFFORTS

The outcome of the constitutional and legal measures and the initiatives undertaken under the various plans in the past for bringing improvements in the socio-economic status of women and thus achieving overall equality among men and women have certainly provided an opportunity to women to associate themselves and maximise their participation in availing the facility of education and in different categories of employment available in private as well as in public sector and various economic, social, cultural and political activities and development programmes and schemes. However, the participation of rural women in availing different level of education, medical and health facilities and in better remunerative occupations of employment and political activities has been at lower extent as compared to urban women.

The overall participation of women in different level of education has been consistently increasing, in fact more sharply than the case of men, after independence. But, the proportions of women enrolled at different levels of educational systems are much less than their men counterpart. The clear-cut differences are also prevailing in the literacy rates among different sexes. Even after achieving higher growth in the literacy rate in favour of women than the male, the ratio of literate women population is lagging far behind to men. The urban women are scoring better than the rural women both in enrolment rates as well as literacy percentages. The overall index of inequality against women is noted to be 77 per cent while they are scoring 110 per cent in the retention rate over their male counterpart in availing education. The women have the disadvantages of around 6 per cent in the availment of education with a cumulative equality of 5 per cent in securing employment and 45 per cent disadvantages in earning opportunities. (Mehta 1990).

The participation of women in work is comparatively at lower extent in urban areas than in rural areas. However, in rural areas, the women are mainly concentrated in agricultural activities as cultivators and agricultural labourers. According to census data, the aggregate work participation rate of women is far behind than men both in rural as well as in urban areas but in absolute term, their number has gone up considerably. Very contrasting picture is, however, emerging in analysing the percentage change in the participation rate of women in workforce during different decades in the past. This has largely happened due to changing concept and definitions of workers as adopted in different censuses. Therefore, certain criticism

in this regards have been generated so far. Singh and Singh (1993) comments that it is obvious that in successive censuses the concept of workers have been changing and so we do not get comparative data of women workers and their contribution to economic work. Paid employment is taken into account but the contribution of women in non-market production is left out. Thus, this seems that there is deliberate exclusion of whole range of activities performed by women and there are cognitive problems in identifying women workers which arise from the culture bases of traditional societies contributing to the underestimation of women workers (Jose 1989). Also, the undercounting of women workers doing income producing work at home is usually either due to problem of ambiguity in the criteria or due to the bias on the part of male respondents and enumerators in acknowledging the existence and extent of women's work on family holding. The perceptions of a study by Sen (1985). Saradamoni (1985) commented that societies attitude, values and biases are the main reasons and it is not surprising that women's economic role and contribution gets hidden under these situations.

In spite the fact that certain conceptual problems have been revealed in the definition of workers used by different censuses in the past the actual number of women workers participating in different economic activities has been consistently increasing over the years. However, occupational structure of the census shows that there has been a marginal improvements in the proportion of workers in white collared, occupations, i.e., teachers, doctors, nurses, office bearers, clerical staff and other health personals (Roy 1992). But this marginal increase has been off set by the decline in the number of women in trade, commerce and informal sector economic activities. According to data available from Director General Employment

and Training, except in the categories of teachers, clerical and related occupations the percentage increase of women workers revealed at marginal level with a decline in private sector and slow growth in the public sector's occupations. A study by Singh (1992) finds that most spectacular increase in the employment of women has been for those belonging the middle class, who are working in secretarial and administrative capacities, as stenographers, clerks, telephone operators, saleswomen and receptionists in urban areas.

The social barriers against women are still well existing even in urban areas. Women with different socio-Economic background are facing differential treatment in job opportunities from their families while willing to participate in labour market. A study by Sashaih (1980) finds that women who enter in labour market belong either to families with poor economic status or those that are highly educated and belong to families with higher economic status. Women from economically poor families' work to supplement the low family income by way of compulsion while the relatively better off women are motivated for some notion of independence (Papola 1982). As a result of lesser participation of women in labour market due to certain underlined social problems the total disadvantage of women in employment depress their position to an extent of 68 per cent from the point of equality with men. On the other hand, the relative proportion of women in total workers and average earnings in each category of economic activity suggest a negative relationship between the share of women in employment (Tilak 1980) and in the level of aggregate earnings (Mehta 1992).

Similarly, prevailing social system and social values are also postulating discrimination against women which tend to place them in a secondary position under the subjugation of men. Mobility among women is also limited which is further reducing their participation in different occupations. A small proportion of them who enter the labour market for seeking employment also receive discriminatory treatment from the employers. They are not considered fit for certain kinds of occupations due to notions regarding their capacity as workers and the employer's efforts to minimise their costs (Mukhopadhyay 1981). Thus, due to one reason or another very small proportions of women find employment in few selected occupations which reduce their supply price not only in these occupations but throughout the economy (Edgeworth 1922).

Accordingly, low participation of women as compared to men in different economic activities has universally been well recognised in the rural areas of different regions in India. This particularly due to the fact that women have little time available to devote in performing different economic activities even to engage themselves in their own family enterprise and business because of their significantly larger involvement in several household related activities. Most statistical models developed by the studies undertaken in the past to explain about the low female participation in work also found that, first, the women have household responsibilities because of which their labour participation is hampered secondly, conventionally women withdraw from the labour market when affluence increases and thirdly, given the fact that women in the Indian setting tend to work in informal system since it is possible to them to simultaneously undertake household responsibilities, access to physical resources within the households can enhance their participation (Sundaram 1988).

Thus, the emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so long as women are excluded from socially productive work and restricted to housework (Friedric 1968). Since an improvement in the economic role of women, especially in term of employment, is very often considered to be an essential precondition for bringing favourable changes in their status.

Thus it revealed that in spite of the introduction of various development programmes and different categories of legal reforms and social Acts, there has been a little progress in improving the participation of women in different social, economic, cultural and political activities due to the existence of several social and cultural boundations restricting them for availing certain facilities, which can directly or indirectly improve their socio-economic status. The biased attitude of society which is openly disfavouring women for availing certain opportunities had also deeply distorted their social status both in rural and urban areas. The imposition of prohibitions and defections in access by men upon women's routine work with inhuman attitude jointly created a lot of vexed problems, deteriorating women's status and put women folk to critical test and challenges.

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It has been well realised now that the effectiveness of law, social reforms and acts can be successful and seen only in a situation when there is social sanction, social acceptance and mass support in its implementation. Various social evils and cultural backwardness, which are so deeply rooted and developed since ages, cannot be removed just only through the introduction of laws and Acts. It seems that we have still to fight with introducing certain socially acceptable programmes and approaches to tackle the still existing social evils such as child marriage, dowry and

discrimination practices being adopted against women by our prevailing traditional social systems and, men segments disfavouring women to use their rights and freedoms and participate in matters related to education and betterment of life opportunities (Nair 1986). A report of the committee on the Status of India (1975) also indicated that lack of adequate planning, co-ordination, inadequate machinery for implementation and resources and multiplicity of agencies have been major causes for failure of various women related development programmes which were initiated in the past. So Bhagawati (1985) suggested mere legislation would not be enough for women development. The legislation and Acts have to be backed by proper implementation and strong public opinions and will.

THE ISSUES

Keeping into consideration the unsatisfactory progress that has achieved in improving the socio-economic status of women in the past it had increasingly been felt desirable that involving rural women with any political institutions and strengthening their partnership at local level political systems and ensuring their participation in the activities of such institutions, including in the affairs of decision making processes, would be an important instrumental measure for improving the socio-economic status and empowering women. In view of these assumptions the policy of providing reservation for women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions has therefore, been thought as an important Government intervention for maximising the participation of women in public mainstream, local level political system and in decision making process in matters related to the initiation, implementation and

supervision of certain development programmes and different activities of village panchayats.

Since, the importance of formation of the local Self-Government as an instrument for approaching community development and welfare of the people was well realised since the British Administration in India during 1842, but the concrete shape in the structure and ideology for the establishment of concerned institutions could not be implemented at policy level. Latter Lord Urzon took some initiative for curtailment of powers to local bodies. Thereafter little efforts were undertaken to strengthened local bodies, excepting that during 1913, the Indian National Congress urged the Government to pass a resolution to increase the power of the local bodies. After independence, the Panchayati Raj Act was well included in the Directive Principles of State Policy, stating that states shall take steps to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such powers as many be necessary to unable them to function as the units of self Government. This approach was well highlighted and brought out in the document of First Plan. However, no constitutional provision was made for the reservation of seats for women in the local bodies, which were earlier formed as Gram Sabhas.

Initiatives towards providing an opportunity to women in the form of associating them with the village Panchayats were first mooted by Bulwant Rai Mehta Committee in 1957. The committee recommended that at least two women should be included in the Panchayats as co-opted members. The Maharashtra was the first state who introduced the provision for the nomination of one or two women to each of the three local bodies under its Zilla Parishad and Panchayati Act of 1961. Latter, Karnataka

in 1983 and, Andhra in 1986, introduced the policy of reservation of 25 seats for women in Gram Panchayats and Zilla Parishads. The state like, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Orissa had also made the provision to reserve 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the total seats for women candidates in different existing tiers of local bodies in their respective states.

However, the experience of providing opportunities to women to become a part of local bodies had not brought out any meaningful changes in the development of women in different states. In the light of the experienced weaknesses of existing local institutions and various suggestions received from different platforms the Government initiated for changing the basic structure, functioning and making constitutional provision for reservation of 30 per cent seats for women in different tiers of Panchayats by introducing 64 Constitutional Amendment bill in 1989. However, this bill was defeated in Parliament and it was re-introduced as the 72nd and 73rd Constitutional Amendment Bill in September 1991 and was finally passed on December 2, 1992.

Seventy Third Amendment Act of the constitution which came into force from April 24, 1993 has proposed that not less than one third of the total numbers of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women. This gender-based reservation policy in favour of women is made applicable even to the number of seats otherwise reserved for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and other backward castes of women in all the tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Provisions have also been made that not less than one third of the total number of offices of chairperson in the Panchayats at each level shall be reserved for women.

Considering the fact that certain powers are delegated to the local level self-government bodies and the representatives of Panchayats are politically authorise and accountable to implement various rural development programmes related to agriculture development, land reforms, water management, forestry, drinking water, fuel and fodder, animal husbandry, health, education, family welfare, poverty alleviation, public distribution system and maintenance of community assets, along with providing opportunities to women to represent the Panchayats, is expected will certainly bring improvements in the social status and in strengthening the empowerment of elected women representatives of the village panchayats.

Conceptually, providing representation to women in Panchayati Raj System could be accepted as an important planning approach regarding minimising the traditional feelings of people about the status of women in our society, particularly in terms of keeping women under the subjugation of men, imposing restrictions by the households and society against them in the availment of certain opportunities and participating in several social, cultural and economic activities and traditional boundations disfavouring them for improving their life style and status is existing social and economic settings. This further would enhance the possibilities of strengthening equality among men and women in the pattern of participation in different activities and development programmes, bringing closeness in mutual understanding status and role to play in the household and the activities to be performed outside households and different decision making process for certain matters. This would also develop the understanding among women regarding their duties and rights about national welfare and its integrity and thus, they can

contribute effectively along with their male counterpart in the development of the country.

However, it has to be kept into consideration that the achieving goal of bringing improvements in the socio-economic status and strengthening empowerment of women through introducing reservation policy in each of the three tiers of Panchayats for women would mainly depend upon its pattern of implementation process and the extent of flexibilities maintained in its implementation, general outlook of elected women representatives of Panchayats towards social reforms and the awareness of realities and objectives of the introduced policy to different socio-economic groups of women and several other related factors such as educational, socio-political and cultural background of elected women, situation of local social environment, prevailing attitude of family, particularly male members of the family, in providing freedom to women for participating in different activities, nature and extent of participation of women in different social, political, cultural and related activities in general and in particular to initiation, introduction, implementation and supervision of various development programmes in their respective village Panchayats and in matters related to decision making process of Panchayat activities.

THE PRESENT STUDY: OBJECTIVES

In this light, the present study has attempted to examine various issues related to the implementation pattern of reservation policy and its awareness among women, the nature of participation of women Pradhans and women members in different meetings, activities and various development programmes of village Panchayats, social reform and welfare activities. Assessment has also been undertaken regarding the extent of changes that have been occurred in bringing improvements in socio-economic status by different categories of PRI's representatives after joining the Panchayarts and the kinds of problems experienced in properly functioning of Panchayat activities and the implementation of different development programmes and schemes. More specifically the present study has attempted to examine the following issues:

- 1. Implementation pattern of reservation policy, procedure adopted for the identification of village Panchayats and constituencies for reservation of women candidates, extent of awareness about the reservation policy among women and involvement of local people in the implementation of reservation policy.**

- 2. Socio-economic, political background and basic characteristics of elected Pradhans and the members, elements motivated to and purpose of women to represent village Panchayats.**

3. Participation of Pradhans and Members in the activities and meetings of Block Panchayats and village Panchayats, matters related to decision making process for the initiation and implementation of development programmes, social, political and welfare activities and problems faced in holding and functioning of Panchayat meetings, extent of co-ordination and co-operation maintained among the Pradhans and members in performing different development programmes and the activities of village Panchayats.
4. Pattern of initiation and implementation of development schemes, extent of involvement of family members and general public in programme implementations, type of schemes introduced and problems faced in initiating and implementations of different schemes and programmes.
5. Perceptions of women Pradhans and members about the changes experienced in their socio-economic and political status and in receiving respect and honour among different segments of people,

involvement in the household activities and affairs and the general routine of work.

6. Views of elected Pradhans and the members of village Panchayats, heads of last Gram Sabhas, Block Panchayats and District Panchayats and the officials of Block and District Panchayats about their assessment regarding the possibilities of achieving improvements in socio-economic status and empowerment of women through initiating reservation policy for women in Panchayats and kinds of alternative options to be initiated for strengthening the empowerment of women.

SAMPLE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

It was decided to examine the objectives and main issues of the study in two regions which possessing differential characteristics in relation to the pattern of socio-economic development, social status of women and the participation of women in different economic and political activities and in the availment of educational opportunities. In this context, we proposed to undertake this study in eastern and western regions of Uttar Pradesh. Since the work participation of women and general awareness about the political system among people is relatively higher in

former region as compared to latter one while the western region is economically more developed and literacy rates of women are higher than the eastern region. Accordingly, one district from each region, namely Gorakhpur from eastern region and Saharanpur from western region, those were following almost similar rate of literacy among rural women as was revealed at respective regional level were finally selected for the purpose of carrying out detailed study. Thereafter we selected two Block Panchayats from each district through applying similar criteria and procedure as adopted for the selection of the districts. Thus, we finally proposed to cover all the existing women headed village Panchayats in the selected Block Panchayats.

The study is based on both, primary data as well as secondary data. The primary data was collected from all the women Pradhans and women members of 93 village Panchayats, comprising 42 village Panchayats of district Gorakhpur and 51 village Panchayats of district Saharanpur. The required data and information was collected with the help of specially designed structural interview schedules from 93 women Pradhans and 404 women members representing the both sample districts. The secondary data on certain aspects was obtained from the official documents of the selected sample District Panchayats, Block Panchayats and Village Panchayats. Some of the general information was also obtained through personal discussions with the officials and the heads of sample Block Panchayats and District Panchayats and the male representatives of Village Panchayats, general public, representatives of the last Gram Sabhas and Nyaya Panchayats. Main issues discussed with these individuals were related to the extent and nature of participation of women Pradhans and Members in the meetings, discussions, policy issues and decision making process at the meetings of block Panchayats and village Panchayat and the type of

involvement in the implementation and supervision of Development programmes and project at the village panchayat level and working efficiency in the functioning of Panchayats.

SETTINGS OF THE SAMPLE DISTRICTS

The State of Uttar Pradesh has been divided into five planning regions on the basis of certain indicators of economic development, and locational and geographical settings. However, significant level of inequalities are still persisting in the process of economic development, income distribution, work participation, literacy rates, infrastructure development and various other indicators of development among these region. Among the two sample regions, western and eastern regions which are selected for the purpose of present study, the literacy rates of women has increased from 12.55 per cent to 26.57 per cent in former region while it increased from 10.73 per cent to 29.92 per cent in latter region between 1981 and 1991, but the sex ratio and the participation of women in work is significantly higher in latter region than the former one. Consequently, among the selected sample districts for the study, the sex ratio of district Gorakhpur of Eastern region is significantly higher (924) than the case of district Saharanpur (851) of Western region. In addition, the work participation rate of women workforce is estimated to be 11.59 for Gorakhpur as against only 3.81 per cent for Saharanpur and 12.32 per cent of the state average. However, very little level of inequality is existing in the work participation rate of male workforce among these two districts, 54 per cent for Saharanpur and 55.27 per cent for Gorakhpur.

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CHAPTER II

IMPLEMENTATION OF PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM

IN UTTAR PRADESH, the Panchayati Raj Institutions were initially constituted in the form of Gram Sabhas during the period 1949, though the State Government had passed the U.P. Panchayati Raj Act on December 7, 1947. According to this act, the provision was made to form the Gram Sabhas in each of the villages of U.P. Recommendations were made in the Act that the Gram Sabha will consists of a head and the five Panchas. It was proposed to elect, both the Pradhans as well as the Panchas of village sabhas, by the local people through organising general elections in the concerned Gram Sabhas, for a fixed tenure of five years.

The Gram Sabhas were provided certain powers and duties to administer and control over certain, social, economic, political and religious activities of the Gram Sabhas and the responsibilities for implementing rural development programmes and schemes for the welfare of the people. Thus, initially 35 thousand Gram Sabhas were constituted in all over the state on August 15, 1949. Thereafter the general elections were regularly held in the state for the formation of Gram Sabhas. However, no provision and policy of reservation for women was provided in the Gram Sabhas but a policy was emphasised to co-opt one woman if no one could be directly elected. In all, the strength of Gram Sabhas had reached from 35 thousands in 1949 to 73914 in 1988 when the last election were held in the state.

FORMATION OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

In the state, a three tier system of Panchayati Raj Institutions, comprising Village Panchayats, Shetriya (Block) Panchayats and District Panchayats were constituted during April-May in plain areas and during October-November in Hill areas. As per 1994 U.P. Panchayat Act, a total number of 58620 Village Panchayats, consisting 52125 in plain areas and remaining 6425 in Hill areas were formed. Beside this, 904 Shetriya (Block) Panchayats and 83 District Panchayats were simultaneously constituted respectively as the second and third tier level of the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

The officials of the Block Development were mainly involved in the formation of Village Panchayats and the constituencies/wards within the Village Panchayats, identification of reserved village Panchayats and its wards for different communities and castes of women, implementation of reservation policy for women and related activities. It was reported by the local people and the representative of the village Panchayats that they were neither asked to participate nor any suggestions were taken from them by the officials of Block Panchayats in matters related to the implementation of Panchayati Raj System and the reservation policy for women. The Village Development Officer was designated as a responsible person for the formation of village panchayats.

In the formation of village Panchayats the old Gram Sabhas were mainly converted into the village Panchayats while in some cases two or at the most three Gram Sabhas which were constituting less than 1000 population were merged together to form a single village Panchayat. There after the village Panchayats were devided into minimum of 11 wards and maximum of 16 wards, depending upon the size of popultion, for the purpose of forming wards and considering them under the reservation for women members.

IDENTIFICATION OF RESERVED VILLAGE PANCHAYATS AND WARDS FOR WOMEN

In view of the identification of vilalge Panchayats for keeping under the reservation for women Pradhans the ratio of women population in the total population of each of the village Panchayats in different Block Panchayats was firstly estimated and then a rankwise list of all village Panchayats according to the ratio of women's population was prepared. Thereafter the highest ranking, one third of the village Panchayats, in terms of women's population, were identified as reserved to be headed by the women Pradhans.

Further, the percentage share of different castes of women population in the total population of identified village Panchayats as reserved for women was estimated and then the reservation of village Panchayats to be headed by different castes of women was fixed according to the share of their population in the total population of concerned Block Panchayats. Accordingly in the identification of reserved wards within the village Panchayats for women members the proportion of women

population in different wards was firstly estimated and latter the top ranking 33 per cent wards were considered under the reservation for woman candidates seeking election for members in each of the village Panchayats. Thereafter, the identification of reserved wards for different castes of women candidates was carried out through considering their population shares in the concerned ward. Formation of village Panchayats, wards within the village Panchayats, identification of reserved seats for women Pradhans and women members and the finalisation of various formalities for the implementation of Panchayati Raj System took around one to three months, in different Block Panchayats.

IMPLEMENTATION OF RESERVATION POLICY

- (a) **STATE LEVEL:** Over and above, no significant attention was paid in property implementation of reservation policy for different communities and caste groups of women in different tiers of Panchayats, excepting in the case of Block Panchayats, at the state level. Based on secondary data obtained from the official documents of State Government, the proportion of women those elected as the representatives of different Panchayats together is however, indicated to be almost at similar proportion as laid down under the provision of Panchayati Raj Act. (33.33 per cent). But, the proportion of women elected as Pramukh/Heads of Block Panchayats is found as higher as 35.62 per cent while the proportion of women heading District Panchayats and village Panchayats are estimated to be 27.71 per cent and 33.30 per cent respectively. Also, the percentage share of women those elected as the members of village panchayats (25.55 per cent), Block Panchayats (24.07 per

cent) and District Panchayats (25.40 per cent) was at much lower extent than it was recommended under the Panchayati Raj Act. In all, it seems that increasing emphasis has only been provided by the State Government to secure the representation of women belonging to lower castes in different tiers of Panchayats at maximum level. Since the percentage representation of lower castes women among the total elected women as the head of Block Panchayats is revealed as high as 59.32 per cent followed by Village Panchayats (48.33 per cent) and District Panchayats (47.83 per cent). Even among the elected members, the percentage share of these groups of women is estimated to be 55.09 per cent at the village Panchayats, 57.76 per cent at Block Panchayats and 53.70 per cent at the level of District Panchayats.

- (b) **SAMPLE DISTRICTS :** However, the analysis based on data gathered from the selected Block Panchayats of districts Gorakhpur and Saharanpur for the purpose of the present study revealed that in reality terms, the reservation policy which introduced in view for maximising the participation of women in the Panchayati Raj System has been well implemented. In fact in most of the village Panchayats the proportion of seats fixed under the reservation for women candidates for the positions of members were significantly higher as directed under the reservation policy for women in the Panchayati Raj Act.

TABLE 2.1 : DISTRIBUTION OF ELECTED MEN AND WOMEN PRADHANS AND MEMBERS OF VILLAGE PANCHAYHTS

BLOCK/ DISTRICT	PRADHANS		MEMBERS		TOTAL		GRAND TOTAL		
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Pradhan	Members	Men	Women	Total
1. Saharanpur	102 (66.23)	52 (33.76)	1104 (61.95)	678 (38.05)	154 (100.0)	1782 (100.0)	1206 (62.29)	730 (37.71)	1936 (100.0)
	57 (66.28)	29 (33.72)	663 (64.94)	358 (35.06)	86 (100.0)	1021 (100.0)	720 (65.04)	387 (34.96)	1107 (100.0)
(i) Gangoh	45 (66.18)	23 (33.82)	441 (57.95)	320 (42.05)	68 (100.0)	761 (100.0)	486 (58.62)	343 (41.38)	829 (100.0)
	91 (64.54)	50 (35.46)	991 (60.21)	655 (39.79)	141 (100.0)	1646 (100.0)	1086 (60.64)	705 (39.36)	1791 (100.0)
2. Gorakhpur	51 (63.75)	29 (36.25)	574 (62.87)	339 (37.13)	80 (100.0)	913 (100.0)	625 (62.94)	368 (37.06)	993 (100.0)
	40 (65.57)	21 (34.43)	417 (56.89)	316 (43.11)	61 (100.0)	733 (100.0)	457 (57.56)	337 (42.44)	794 (100.0)
TOTAL	193 (65.42)	102 (34.58)	2095 (61.11)	1333 (38.89)	295 (100.0)	3428 (100.0)	2288 (61.46)	1435 (38.54)	3723 (100.0)

TABLE 2.2 : AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESERVATION POLICY

INDIVIDUAL'S PROVIDED INFORMATION	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
1. Block Officials	1 (1.96)	38 (17.51)	39 (14.55)	5 (11.90)	32 (17.11)	37 (16.16)	6 (6.45)	70 (17.33)	76 (15.29)
	36 (70.59)	71 (32.72)	107 (39.93)	28 (66.68)	63 (33.69)	91 (39.74)	64 (68.81)	134 (33.17)	198 (39.84)
3. Old Pradhan	6 (11.76)	72 (33.18)	78 (29.10)	5 (11.90)	54 (28.88)	59 (25.76)	11 (11.83)	126 (31.19)	137 (27.57)
	5 (9.81)	7 (3.23)	12 (4.48)	3 (7.14)	9 (4.82)	12 (5.24)	8 (8.60)	16 (3.96)	24 (4.83)
5. Villagers	2 (3.92)	21 (9.68)	23 (8.58)	1 (2.38)	19 (10.16)	20 (8.74)	3 (3.23)	40 (9.90)	43 (8.65)
	1 (1.96)	2 (0.92)	3 (1.12)	-	5 (2.67)	5 (2.18)	1 (1.08)	7 (1.73)	8 (1.61)
7. Husband of Pradhans	-	6 (2.76)	6 (2.24)	-	5 (2.67)	5 (2.18)	-	11 (2.72)	11 (2.21)
	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

This is clearly indicated by the fact that around 35 per cent village Panchayats in our sample districts are headed by women Pradhans and the proportion of women elected as the Pradhans and members together in the sample village Panchayats constituted around 39 per cent. The representation of women members in village Panchayat is found to be 38.89 per cent, consisting 39.79 per cent in Gorakhpur and 38.05 per cent in Saharanpur, in fact the corresponding proportion is revealed as high as 42.05 per cent in Nagal Block Panchayat of district Saharanpur. Similarly, the proportion of women headed village Panchayats were relatively higher in both the Block Panchayats representing Gorakhpur than of the Saharanpur.

In all the proportion of women representing village Panchayats both as Pradhan and members together accounted significantly at higher level in Gorakhpur (39.36 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (37.71 per cent), though, the corresponding proportion of women is found as high as 42.44 per cent in Pipariach Block Panchayat of former district followed by 41.38 per cent in Nagal Block Panchayat of latter district. It may finally be pointed out that over and above the provision of reservation policy introduced under the Panchayati Raj Act has provided a appreciable opportunities to women largely to represent village Panchayats in the capacity of members than as the Pradhans. It was revealed through discussions held with the officials of Block Panchayats that a significant number of women members have also been fortunately elected form non-reserved wards in different village Panchayats due to lacking proper information and confusion prevailed among local people in terms of the numbers of constituencies and which constituencies have been fixed under the reservation for women members. In fact, due to lacking involvement of local people in the formation of village Panchayats, wards and the

identification of reserved village Panchayats and its wards for women candidates the people of most of the village Panchayats could get such information after visiting the office of Block Panchayats only. In most of the cases, the local people were informed in this regard only one or two weeks before the elections were held.

Considering the responses of 93 women Pradhans and 404 women members which covered for the purpose of present study, it revealed that significantly a highest proportions of respondents (39.84 per cent), consisting 68.81 per cent among Pradhans and 33.17 per cent, members were informed by their family members about the reservation of village Panchayats and wards while a second majority of them (27.25 per cent) were informed by the Pradhans of last Gram Sabhas followed by 15.29 per cent respondent were informed by the Block Officials in this regard.

Inquiring among the local people and the representatives of last Gram Sabhas regarding their perceptions and views about the procedure adopted in the implementation of reservation policy for women, and the level of their satisfaction in this regard, it was noticed that a large group of people were highly dissatisfied with the type of procedure adopted in the identification of village Panchayats and wards within the village Panchayats for considering under the reservation for women candidates. The local people have suggested that at least some flexibility should have been maintained in the identification of village Panchayats and wards for the reservation of women candidates. Consultations with the local people and the representatives of the last Gram Sabhas should have been done through organising the meetings and discussing the matters related to the selection of wards for reservation of women. They also expressed the views that the participation of local

people should have been considered in the identification of village Panchayats and its wards for reservation of women candidates. So that the villages having the availability of well-educated women and those were possessing past experiences of carrying out social reform, activities and the leadership quality would have been selected as the reserved villages for women candidates. Due to lacking participation of local people in this regards a significant proportion of elected women both as Pradhans as well as members were illiterate, lacking social reforms outlooks and leadership quality and were mainly the relatives and family members of the representatives of last Gram Sabhas, Nyay Panchayats and belonging to socio-economically well-to-do families. They were hardly taking any interest in participating the activities of village Panchayats and Block Panchayats and in initiating any development programmes and welfare activities in the concerned village Panchayats. This particularly due to the fact that a overwhelming majorities of the women were forced by their family members for contesting elections for Pradhans as well as members. Since we found, even a large proportion of elected women representatives of different village Panchayats (55 per cent) were not satisfied with the procedure adopted in reserving the wards for women candidates in their respective village Panchayats.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE ELECTIONS

Further an attempt has been carried out to examine the nature and extent of participation of local people in general and women in particular in matters related to use their voting rights, contesting elections for the positions of Pradhans and members of village Panchayats etc. It was observed that the discrimination against women was hardly been practiced by their families in providing them an opportunities to participate to use their voting rights, contesting election both for the positions of Pradhans as well as members of village Panchayats, though a significant numbers of women were forced and motivated to contest elections by their relatives and family members. In the total population of 2.44 lakhs of both the sample districts, the proportions of eligible voters were 32.11 per cent, while over 74 per cent of the voters had participated in the election to franchise their votes. The participation of women in voting was estimated to be 71.00 per cent, consisting relatively higher in Gorakhpur (74.24 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (68.50 per cent). The proportion of male voters who participated in the election were also noted significantly higher in Gorakhpur (78.00 per cent) than in Saharanpur (74.40 per cent). But, the participation of women in the election was found relatively at lower order as compared to their male counterpart in both the districts.

TABLE 2.3 : TOTAL POPULATION , VOTERS AND PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE IN VOTING AND CONTESTING ELECTIONS

DESCRIPTION	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1. Population	75660	66518	142178	53274	48693	101967	128934	115211	244145
2. No. of Voters	23946	20210	44156	18595	15655	34250	42541	35865	78406
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
3. Persons Voted	17815	13844	31659	14875	11622	26497	32690	25466	58156
	(74.40)	(68.50)	(71.70)	(78.00)	(74.24)	(77.36)	(76.84)	(71.00)	(74.17)
4. Population Per Panchayat	1796	2936	2181	1702	2761	2077	1752	2951	2132
5. Contested Election									
(a) for member	1378	660	2038	1068	436	1504	2446	1096	3542
	(5.75)	(3.26)	(4.61)	(5.74)	(2.78)	(4.39)	(5.75)	(3.05)	(4.51)
(b) for Pradhan	261	185	446	217	190	407	478	375	853
	(1.09)	(0.92)	(1.01)	(1.17)	(1.21)	(1.08)	(1.12)	(1.05)	(1.09)

Further, we found that the women were not lagging far behind to their male counterparts in contesting the elections as the candidates for the positions of both Pradhans as well as members in their respective village Panchayats. The proportions of both men and women candidates those contested the election for the positions of Pradhans were relatively less than for the position of the members but proportionate differences between men and women candidates were relatively at lesser extent for the position of latter category than the former one. Also, the proportion of women which contested the election for the position of Pradhans was 3.05 per cent as against 5.75 per cent men while 1.12 per cent men and 1.05 per cent women had contested the election in favour of members. Across the districts, the percentage of both men and women who contested the election for the position of Pradhan in different village Panchayats were relatively at lower extent in Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur while the situation was reversal for the position of members among these two districts. Relatively little differences were appeared among the proportions of men and women candidates those contested the election both for Pradhans and members of different village Panchayats in district Saharanpur as compared to Gorakhpur.

Examining the pattern of average numbers of candidates contested election for each of the positions of Pradhan and member in different village Panchayats it seems that there was a significant competition in the election for both the categories of positions in both the districts. Average numbers of contestants for the position of Pradhans were comparatively higher (5.48 candidates) than the position of members (4.40 per cent candidates). A well appreciable participation of women as the contestants for

both the categories of positions was observed in both the districts, but the average numbers of contestants for the positions of both Pradhans and members were relatively at lower order among women as compared to men. Average number of women candidates contested election for the position of Pradhan were 4.70 as against 5.90 candidates among men and for the position of member the proportion of women and men contestants stood 3.34 and 5.07. It was further observed that the political environment and awareness regarding the importance and significance of

TABLE 2.4 : PARTICIPATION IN CONTESTING ELECTION FOR THE POSITIONS OF PRADHANS AND MEMBERS

BLOCK/ DISTRICT	PRADHAN			MEMBER			TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Saharanpur	6.13	4.88	5.71	5.02	3.40	4.41	5.12	3.51	4.51
Gangoh	6.21	4.48	5.63	5.00	3.00	4.30	5.09	3.11	4.40
Nagal	6.02	5.39	5.81	5.05	3.85	4.55	5.15	3.95	4.65
Gorakhpur	5.65	4.50	5.24	5.12	3.28	4.39	5.16	3.37	4.45
Jangal Kauria	4.90	5.07	4.96	5.00	3.47	4.13	5.00	3.59	4.47
Pipraich	6.60	3.71	6.61	5.28	3.08	4.33	5.39	3.12	3.93
TOTAL	5.90	4.70	5.48	5.07	3.34	4.40	5.14	3.44	4.48

involving themselves with the political systems was well developed among the women in the village Panchayats comprising of Block Panchayats Nagal in Saharanpur and Jangal Kauna in Gorakhpur, which was well depicted by the fact that the participation of women in contesting election for the positions of both Pradhans as well as Members is estimated to be significantly much higher in these two Block Panchayats as compared to remaining sample Block Panchayats and at district level (Table 2.4).

PARTICIPATION IN CANVASSING FOR ELECTION

The local people had devoted around one month in the canvassing for favour of their candidates through making door-to-door visits and organising meetings in main public places. Both men and women family members and the relatives were reported to have well participated in supporting the candidature of present Pradhans and the members. However, only 6.04 per cent of the elected representatives of village Panchayats, consisting 7.18 per cent members and only 1.07 per cent Pradhans had participated in the canvassing for favour of their own candidature. Involvement of family members and the relatives of women candidates in the canvassing for their wards was very large in both the districts, 75.75 per cent in Saharanpur and 77.73 per cent in Gorakhpur. Interestingly, of the 93 Pradhan as covered in our study, only 1.08 per cent of them were involved in canvassing of election while the proportion of women members was 7.18 per cent (Table 2.5).

TABLE 2.5 : PARTICIPATION IN CANVASSING FOR THE ELECTION

INDIVIDUALS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Alone	1 (1.96)	13 (5.99)	14 (5.22)	-	16 (8.56)	16 (6.99)	1 (1.07)	29 (7.18)	30 (6.04)
Family Members	18 (35.30)	146 (67.28)	164 (61.20)	21 (50.00)	115 (61.50)	136 (59.39)	39 (41.94)	261 (64.60)	300 (60.36)
Friends/ relatives	12 (23.53)	27 (12.44)	39 (14.55)	11 (26.19)	31 (16.58)	42 (18.34)	23 (24.73)	58 (14.36)	81 (16.30)
Other Local People	15 (29.41)	21 (9.68)	36 (13.43)	6 (14.29)	18 (9.62)	24 (10.48)	21 (22.58)	39 (9.65)	60 (12.07)
Old Pradhans and PRIs Members	5 (9.80)	10 (4.61)	15 (5.60)	4 (9.52)	7 (3.74)	11 (4.80)	9 (9.68)	17 (4.21)	26 (5.23)
TOTAL	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan

M = Member

T = Total

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL SOCIO-POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

The Panchayati Raj Institutions in the form of Gram Sabhas had been functioning since 1949 in the State. But, the practice of holding general election for electing the positions of Pradhans and Panchas was hardly practiced in a large numbers of Gram Sabhas in the past. However, when the people at village level were informed that in the newly introduced Panchayati Raj System the constitutional provisions have been made to provide certain powers and rights for controlling the administrative functioning and financial managements of various Government,

Departments a larger amount of financial resources, various facilities and benefits would additionally be provided to the Pradhans and members of village

TABLE 2.6: TYPE OF LOCAL ENVIRONMENT DEVELOPED BEFORE AND THE AFTER ELECTION

TYPE OF ENVIRONMENT	SAHARANPUR		GORAKHPUR	
	Before Election	After Election	Before Election	After Election
1. Groupism and Group Clashes	18	21	13	17
	(35.29)	(41.18)	(30.95)	(40.48)
2. Conflicts Among Different Communities	5	9	2	1
	(9.80)	(17.65)	(4.76)	(2.38)
3. Peaceful Atmosphere	27	23	27	24
	(52.94)	(45.10)	(64.29)	(57.14)
TOTAL NO. OF PANCHAYATS	51	51	42	42
	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)

Panchayats a large number of candidates had desired to represent the village Panchayats. Therefore, the elections were took place in almost the village Panchayats for both Pradhans as well as Members. With the nomination of a large numbers of candidates for different positions from every social groups and castes an entirely new political environment was created in the villages before the final elections were held. This emerging political environment has given birth to groupism, social clashes and conflicts among local people and this process continued even after the elections were completed. As a consequence, traditionally maintained co-operation and friendly environments among different social groups of population has began deteriorating. In fact, several groups emerged and the households were divided into various caste groups and divisions. The groupism and social conflicts reached at peak stage during the period of canvassing for elections

in around one third of the village Panchayats and it further spread over in 40.86 per cent village Panchayats. However, the proportion of village Panchayats which effected adversely by the emergence of groupism and communal conflicts before election as well as after election were comparably at lower extent in district Gorakhpur than in district Saharanpur.

MOTIVATION FOR CONTESTING ELECTION

Since, in the rural areas of both the districts, the men family members were generally dominating in undertaking certain decisions in matters related to their family affairs while the women were playing a little role in this regard. With this understanding, it was excepted that the participation of women in contesting election for the representatives of village Panchayats should be largely governed by the choice of male family members rather than their own decision. As per our assumptions, the analysis based on our sample data has also well depicted the fact that significantly a highest proportion of around one-half of the elected women Pradhans and Members were motivated to contest election of village Panchayats by their family members while only 6.84 per cent of them had taken this decision independently and another 43 per cent women were motivated by the individuals such as their relatives, old Gram Pradhans and local people of the concerned Village Panchayats in this regard.

However, the proportion of women who decided to contest election of Panchayats without the motivation of any people were significantly higher in Gorakhpur (9.61 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (4.48 per cent), though the proportion of such

women who contested the election for Pradhan was as high as 24.43 per cent in Gorakhpur. On the other, the women who motivated to contest election for Pradhan by their family members and relatives were around 74 per cent in the case of district Saharanpur as against around 60 per cent for Gorakhpur. This indicates the fact that the women in Gorakhpur are enjoying significantly higher level of freedom and opportunities to participate in political activities as compared in Saharanpur.

TABLE 2.7 : MOTIVATION FOR CONTESTING ELECTION FOR PRADHANS AND MEMBERS

INDIVIDUALS MOTIVATED	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Self	2 (3.92)	10 (4.61)	12 (4.48)	9 (21.43)	13 (6.95)	22 (9.61)	11 (11.83)	23 (5.69)	34 (6.84)
Family Members	32 (62.75)	106 (48.85)	138 (51.49)	25 (59.53)	88 (47.06)	113 (49.34)	57 (61.29)	194 (48.02)	251 (50.50)
Friends/ Relatives	6 (11.76)	20 (9.22)	26 (9.71)	-	19 (10.16)	19 (8.30)	6 (6.45)	39 (9.65)	45 (9.05)
Villagers	7 (13.73)	25 (11.52)	32 (11.94)	5 (11.90)	20 (10.70)	25 (10.92)	12 (12.90)	45 (11.14)	57 (11.47)
Old Pradhans	4 (7.84)	42 (19.34)	46 (17.16)	3 (7.14)	37 (19.78)	40 (17.46)	7 (7.53)	79 (19.55)	86 (17.31)
Old Panchayat Members	14 (6.45)	14 (5.22)		10 (5.35)	10 (4.37)		24 (5.95)	24 (4.83)	
TOTAL	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

OBJECTIVES BEHIND REPRESENTING PANCHAYATS

Since the analysis undertaken in the part revealed that an overwhelming majority of the women were motivated to contest election for the positions of Pradhans and member of concerned village Panchayats by their family members. However, enquiring about their objectives and purpose of representing village Panchayats the analysis showed that around one fourth of the women, comprising 24 Pradhans and 97 members were initially not willing but motivated by their family members for contesting the elections, while around three fourth of the elected women representatives of different village Panchayats, have thought of carrying out at least some development and welfare activities for the interest of local people after getting elected as the representative of the concerned village Panchayats. Significantly, a large proportion of women (37.63 per cent), comprising 27.45 per cent from Saharanpur and 50.00 per cent from Gorakhpur, had the objective for initiating and promoting various development activities in the concerned village Panchayats after getting elected as the Pradhan while the objectives of another 23.66 per cent elected Pradhans was to introduce and promote certain welfare activities for improving the social status of the people. Among the elected members, the objectives of a highest proportion (25.99 per cent) of them was to carry out various social activities and introduce certain programmes for providing social justice for disadvantaged groups of people and the objective of a second majority of around 14 per cent members was to develop various levels of educational facilities.

TABLE 2.8 : OBJECTIVES BEHIND TO REPRESENT PRI's

OBJECTIVES	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Promoting Welfare Activities	14 (27.45)	15 (6.91)	29 (10.82)	8 (19.05)	20 (10.69)	28 (12.23)	22 (23.66)	35 (8.66)	57 (11.47)
Promoting Development	14 (27.45)	16 (7.37)	30 (11.19)	21 (50.00)	29 (15.51)	50 (21.83)	35 (37.63)	45 (11.14)	80 (16.10)
Development of Education	2 (3.92)	33 (15.21)	35 (13.06)	-	23 (12.30)	23 (10.04)	2 (2.15)	56 (13.86)	58 (11.67)
Carrying Social Activities/Social Justice	3 (5.88)	62 (28.57)	65 (24.26)	-	43 (22.99)	43 (18.78)	3 (3.22)	105 (25.99)	108 (21.73)
Promoting Drinking Water Facilities	2 (3.92)	17 (7.83)	19 (7.09)	1 (2.38)	12 (6.42)	13 (5.68)	3 (3.23)	29 (7.18)	32 (6.44)
Improving the Status of Women	4 (7.85)	19 (8.76)	23 (8.58)	-	18 (9.63)	18 (7.86)	4 (4.30)	37 (9.16)	41 (8.25)
No objective	12 (23.53)	55 (25.35)	66 925.00	12 (28.57)	42 (22.46)	54 (23.58)	24 (25.81)	97 (24.01)	121 (24.34)
TOTAL	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

Average population per village Panchayat was estimated to be around 2132, comprising relatively higher of 2181 persons in Saharanpur as compared to Gorakhpur (2078 persons) and it varied between 2062 persons to 2356 persons across the different Block Panchayats. Accordingly, average population of women per women Pradhan accounted for 2852 persons as against 1752 persons for men Pradhans. Of the 295 village Panchayats constituted in both the districts together, about 36 per cent of them were headed by women Pradhans and average number of

members in women headed village Panchayats (13.07 members) were significantly at higher level than in the men headed village Panchayats (11.62 members).

Considering into account the financial situation of village Panchayats, pattern of finances received from different sources for various purposes and the amount of expenditure incurred on the implementation of different development programmes, it revealed that the total amounts of finances received by different Block Panchayats of district Gorakhpur for different purposes was significantly at higher level (5231.93 lakh) than district Saharanpur (Rs.3019.38 lakh) and per village Panchayat amount of finances accounted for Rs.3.87 lakh in Saharanpur and Rs.4.24 lakhs in Gorakhpur. However, the Block Panchayats of both the districts were not in a position to utilise the whole amounts which were received for the implementation of different programmes from the DRDA. The utilisation of finances for different purposes was estimated to be only 86.76 per cent in both the district together, though it was relatively higher for Saharanpur (89.92 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (84.67 per cent). In fact, under utilisation of finances was well observed in the case of the implementation of almost the rural development excepting only the case of D.W.C.R.A. in district Saharanpur. Further, it revealed that both the districts have received highest amounts of finances for Sunisshit Rojgar Yojana (Gorakhpur 26.59 per cent and Saharanpur (25.23 per cent). Besides this, programmes such as Jawahar Rojgar Yojana and Indira Avas Yojana have been the major schemes which were introduced in both the districts. Since the share of finances received for the implementation of these programmes together was estimated to be 40.09 per cent for Saharanpur and 34.58 per cent for Gorakhpur.

TABLE 2.9: DISTRICT-WISE AMOUNTS OF FINANCES RECEIVED FOR DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES (1998-99)

(Rs. Lakh)

NAME OF THE PROGRAMME	SAHARANPUR		GORAKHPUR	
	Received	Expenditure	Received	Expenditure
1. Sunischt Rojgar Yojana	761.90 (25.23)	706.90 (26.04)	1391.00 (26.59)	1320.45 (29.80)
2. Jawahar Rogar Yojana	527.57 (17.47)	506.83 (18.67)	898.96 (17.18)	825.35 (18.62)
3. Indira Awas Yojana	682.88 (22.62)	534.20 (19.67)	910.65 (17.40)	870.25 (19.64)
4. Million Wells Scheme	119.50 (3.96)	76.84 (2.83)	208.53 (3.99)	195.28 (4.41)
5. I.R.D.P.	355.83 (11.78)	333.09 (12.26)	1013.40 (19.37)	457.53 (10.32)
6. TRYSEM	20.95 (0.69)	18.38 (0.68)	42.63 (0.81)	37.18 (0.84)
7. Improved tool-kits	27.75 (0.92)	26.50 (0.98)	36.47 (0.70)	36.42 (0.82)
8. Ganga Kalyan Yojana	-	-	109.25 (2.09)	83.40 (1.88)
9. Rural Water Supply	467.00 (15.47)	462.00 (17.02)	562.29 (10.75)	555.47 (12.53)
10. D.W.C.R.A.	46.87 (1.55)	46.87 (1.73)	45.21 (0.86)	45.13 (1.02)
11. Bio-gas	8.0 (0.27)	2.19 (0.08)	12.36 (0.24)	3.90 (0.09)
12. Improved Chhulha	1.12 (0.04)	1.12 (0.04)	1.18 (0.02)	1.18 (0.03)
TOTAL	3019.38 (100.00)	2714.92 (100.00)	5231.93 (100.00)	4431.54 (100.00)
Per Village Panchayat	3.87	3.48	4.24	3.59

CHAPTER III

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

IT was well visualised that very little opportunities and freedom have been provided to women to participate in educational systems, social and cultural activities and in seeking employment in rural areas of both the sample districts due to traditionally developed and prevailing backward social and cultural system. Inequalities in work participation were highly prevalent among the women of different castes and income groups. The women among the upper castes and those belonging to economically sound households were observed hardly participating in different economic activities even in the family enterprises and agricultural operations. The existence of Pardah system was recognised strictly restricting them to participate in different local social and religious functions. However, the un-married girls had little more opportunities than the married women to participate in different activities and to move outside households. Hence, the participation of girls in the availment of different levels of educational systems was seen consistently increasing over the years in the both the regions. But, the proportion of literate women in western region was recorded significantly higher than in the eastern region.

The economic activities of different categories and agricultural operations were generally performed by the women belonging to lower caste and low-income groups. The participation of upper castes and higher economic strata women was limited

upto the rearing of children and animals and certain indoor activities of their households while lower caste women were reported mainly participate in performing the various economic activities, including the agricultural operations of landlords as labourers, in addition to participate in their own domestic work. By and large the women of eastern region had relatively higher level of freedom to move outside households and to participate in different economic, social, cultural and political activities as compared to women of western region. As a result, the work participation rate of women in former region was estimated relatively much higher than in the latter region. It could be argued that the western region is economically more developed and the proportion of population under the situation of poverty is relatively at lower extent as compared to eastern region. As the consequences, a large proportion of rural women is compelled to participate in labour force due to economic pressure (Sen, 1985) in eastern region than in western region. At the same time, various studies also postulate the fact that poverty is not the sole cause; other socio-cultural also influence the phenomena of women's participation in work (Singh and Singh, 1993).

Since, it has been expected that the intervention of Government to secure the representation of women in local level Panchayati Raj Institutions in rural areas through introducing the reservation policy for women could be an important planning initiative for maximising the role and participation of women in different socio-economic, cultural, political and decision making processes of the family affairs and to brought out significant change in their socio-economic status and empowerment. However, the level of success of the concerned motives would mainly depend upon the implementation pattern of reservation policy for women in different village

panchayats, socio-economic and political background and related basic characteristics of women elected as the representatives of different Panchayats. Factors such as the attitude and intention of elected women towards the initiation and involvement in the implementation of various development and welfare programmes and the capacity in making efforts to link different segments of village population in general and women in particular in the implementation of concerned programmes will also matter largely in improving the status and empowerment of women. Considering these facts in mind we further proceed to examine the socio-economic background of the elected Pradhans and the members of sample village Panchayats.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

The studies carried out in the past revealed that the advantages of introducing reservation policy has gone largely in favour of women belonging to socio-economically and politically sound background. Because the extent of awareness and information regarding the introduction of providing reservation for favour of women and the village Panchayats and its wards which were identified under the category of reservation for women candidates was available well before the time of the election to the women which male family members were already associated with different political organizations, last Gram Sabhas, and were socially and economically dominating people than the general people of different village Panchayats. Therefore, a majority of women candidates were mainly elected among the former communities and socio-economic groups as the representatives

of village Panchayats but a significant proportion of them do not even possess functional literacy. (Subh (1994), Mehta (1997) and Sharma (1996). The studies undertaken in Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal also show that gender basis, upper caste domination, assertiveness and illiteracy and ignorance were the major impediments in women taking part in PRIs. As a result of there dominating features of elected women in the PRI's they lacked self-confidence (Smiakanthi 1997).

The analysis based on our sample data had also found in the last chapter that a significant proportions of women were motivated and forced to contest the election of village panchayats for the positions of both Pradhans as well as members by their male family members. Further, it was observed that a significant proportion of the elected women Pradhans (35.48 per cent), consisting 37.25 per cent in Saharanpur and 33.33 per cent in Gorakhpur, were the family members of the last Gram Sabhas representatives. It was also observed that the elected women Pradhans as well as member were lacking the confidence of involving themselves in the implementation of development activities and in the activities of Panchayats independently. It is, therefore, we generally observed that the male family members of women Pradhans were mainly performing the duties and functions of Pradhan in holding meetings, visiting Block Panchayats and the implementation of development programmes and schemes in most of the village Panchayats. In fact, the women representatives of 98 per cent village Panchayats had reported that they had never visited alone to the Block Panchayats in the past. The combined percentages of both Pradhans and members were who which women visiting Block Panchayat with their male family members were accounted for 88.33 per cent, comprising 89.85 per

cent members and 81.72 per cent Pradhans, though the corresponding proportions of women were significantly at lower level for Saharanpur (86.20 per cent) as compared for Gorakhpur (90.83 per cent). But, among women Pradhans, significantly higher proportion of them from Saharanpur (84.32 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (78.37 per cent) were generally accompanied by their family members in visiting to Block Panchayats for attending meetings and other purposes. However, only a small proportion of the women representative of different village Panchayat were found usually visit to Block Panchayats either accompanying with other members and Pradhans (4.23 per cent) or alone (2.01 per cent). It was further noted that the women those were visiting Block Panchayats either alone or with other representatives of village Panchayats were directly or indirectly linked with different political parties and social organisations before they elected as the representatives of village Panchayats. Around 4 per cent of the elected women, 8.60 per cent Pradhans and 2.72 per cent members had the background of participation in the meetings and activities of different political parties and the social organisations before representing village Panchayats. However, the proportion of women which had such background was reported significantly at higher level in Saharanpur (4.10 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (3.49 per cent).

TABLE 3.1 : ASSISTANCE IN VISITING BLOCK PANCHAYATS

ACCOMPANIED BY	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Alone	1	-	1	6	3	9	7	3	10
	(1.96)		(0.37)	(14.29)	(1.60)	(3.93)	(7.53)	(0.74)	(2.01)
Friends and Relatives	4	4	8	2	1	3	6	5	11
	(7.84)	(1.84)	(2.99)	(4.76)	(0.54)	(1.31)	(6.45)	(1.24)	(2.21)
Family Members	43	188	231	33	175	208	76	363	439
	(84.32)	(86.64)	(86.20)	(78.57)	(93.58)	(90.83)	(81.72)	(89.85)	(88.33)
Old Pradhan	-	14	14	1	1	2	1	15	16
		(6.45)	(5.22)	(2.38)	(0.54)	(0.87)	(1.07)	(3.71)	(3.22)
Other Representative of PRI's	3	11	14	-	7	7	3	18	21
	(5.88)	(5.07)	(5.22)		(3.74)	(3.06)	(3.23)	(4.46)	(4.23)
TOTAL	51	217	268	42	187	229	93	404	497
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

FAMILY BACKGROUND

- (a) **SOCIAL:** Average size of family of the elected representatives of sample village Panchayats consisted of 5.53 persons, 6.20 persons for women Pradhans and 5.37 persons for women members. In both the districts the family size of Pradhans was estimated to be comparably larger than the members but significantly a highest proportion of around 30 per cent respondents in each district had the family size of 5 members. However, the sex ratio of population for the sample districts was reported to be at lower level than the state average. The population of women per thousand male population was estimated to be 831, which was again significantly larger for the households of women Pradhans (869 women) as compared to the women members (821 women) in different village Panchayats. Across the different size of households, the sex ratio varied at highest level from 880 in the family size of six members to at lowest level of 783 in the family size of seven members. Table 3.2
- (b) **ECONOMIC:** Since the economy of both the sample districts is based on agriculture and it's related activities so the local people were mainly depending on it both for employment and livelihood. The analysis based on our sample data collected for the purpose of present study also depicted the fact that significantly a highest proportion of the respondents (59.36 per cent), both Pradhans (69.89 per cent) as well as members (56.93 per cent) belonged to the farming households. However, a second majority of the

respondents (19.92 per cent), consisting 23.76 per cent members and 3.23 per cent Pradhans were belonging to landless households. It further revealed that the proportion of Pradhans as well as members reported to have agricultural background were significantly higher in Saharanpur (64 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (53 per cent), though concerned proportions of women Pradhans were as higher as 4.31 per cent in Saharanpur. Also, the proportion of women members those elected from landless households in different village Panchayats of district Saharanpur were found considerably at higher extent than in Gorakhpur.

TABLE 3.2 : CHARACTERISTICS OF THE HOUSEHOLDS

Considering the economic background of elected representatives of PRI's the analysis revealed that the household of Pradhans were economically more sound than the members since per household income of Pradhans (Rs.38541) was significantly higher than the members (Rs.25175) and the agricultural activities were the main sources of income for both Pradhans and members of different village Panchayats. The share of agriculture in the total income generated from different sources in the households of Pradhan was reported to be significantly higher than the households of members. Income earned by the working family members as wages and salaries from other than agricultural activities had the contribution of 24.47 per cent and 15.61 per cent in the total income generated from different sources for the households of Pradhans and members respectively.

As indicated in the preceding analysis that the western region is economically well strong than the eastern region. Again we found that the per household average income of elected Pradhans as well as members of different village Panchayats those representing western region was relatively at higher level than the eastern region. The agricultural activities were found to be contributing significantly much larger amount of income in the households of both Pradhans and members in Saharanpur than in Gorakhpur. However, the income earned through wages and salaries from non-agricultural activities was indicated to be the second most source of income in the households of the PRI's representatives of Gorakhpur, while the contribution of income earned from agricultural activities in different sample households was registered only 35.32 per cent in Gorakhpur as against 61.44 per cent in

Saharanpur. Average household income of Pradhans and members together was accounted for Rs.29.80 thousand in Saharanpur and Rs.25.19 thousand in Gorakhpur.

TABLE 3.3 : DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY THEIR OCCUPATION

OCCUPATION	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Agriculture	43 (84.31)	129 (59.45)	172 (64.18)	22 (52.38)	101 (54.01)	123 (53.71)	65 (69.89)	230 (56.93)	295 (59.36)
Landless Labourer	1 (1.96)	64 (29.49)	65 (24.25)	2 (4.76)	32 (17.11)	34 (14.85)	3 (3.23)	96 (23.76)	99 (19.92)
Business	1 (1.96)	7 (3.23)	8 (2.99)	7 (16.67)	10 (5.35)	17 (7.42)	8 (8.60)	17 (4.21)	25 (5.03)
Service	1 (1.96)	9 (4.15)	10 (3.73)	4 (9.52)	19 (10.16)	23 (10.04)	5 (5.38)	28 (6.93)	33 (6.63)
Self Employment	- (2.30)	5 (1.86)	5 (2.38)	1 (9.63)	18 (8.30)	19 (1.07)	1 (5.69)	23 (4.83)	24
Others	5 (9.81)	3 (1.38)	8 (2.99)	6 (14.29)	7 (3.74)	13 (5.68)	11 (11.83)	10 (2.48)	21 (4.23)
TOTAL	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

Distribution of sample households according to different income group ranges revealed that the family income of a overwhelming majority of 81 per cent respondents, consisting 64.52 per cent Pradhans and 84.65 per cent members was less than Rs.40 thousand; while it was as large as over Rs.80 thousands for 12 respondents. However, the proportion of respondents falling in the income groups of below Rs.40 thousands were reported to be marginally higher in Saharanpur (81.35 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (80.35 per cent), but the proportions of members estimated in the respective

income groups of households were found significantly larger than the cases of Pradhans in both the districts. However, in the relatively higher income groups of above Rs. 40 thousands, the proportions of households belonging to Pradhans of Gorakhpur were at higher extent (28.57 per cent) than the Saharanpur (21.17 per cent). Over and above it was well depicted the fact that the elected Pradhans and members of different village Panchayats in both the sample districts have a strong economic background. Also the economic conditions of the families of Pradhans was more strong than the cases of members, in both Gorakhpur and Saharanpur, but the difference in average income of households was relatively at larger level in favour of Pradhans in latter district than in the former one.

TABLE 3.4 : AVERAGE INCOME OF HOUSEHOLDS FROM DIFFERENT SOURCES

(Annual income in Rs.)

SOURCE OF INCOME	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Agriculture	30634 (71.90)	15408 (57.52)	18306 (61.44)	12057 (35.88)	8187 (35.13)	8897 (35.32)	22245 (57.72)	12066 (47.93)	13971 (50.48)
Labour	659 (1.55)	5325 (19.88)	4437 (14.89)	1029 (3.06)	3987 (17.11)	3444 (13.67)	826 (2.14)	4705 (18.69)	3980 (14.38)
Business	2753 (6.46)	1549 (5.78)	1778 (5.97)	6114 (18.20)	2070 (8.88)	2811 (11.16)	4271 (11.08)	1790 (7.11)	2254 (8.14)
Service	6486 (15.22)	2657 (9.92)	3386 (11.36)	10443 (31.08)	5406 (23.20)	6330 (25.12)	8273 (21.47)	3930 (15.61)	4742 (17.14)
Self Employment	- (4.48)	1200 (3.26)	971 (2.75)	924 (8.89)	2073 (7.39)	1862 (1.08)	417 (6.37)	1604 (4.99)	1382
Others	2077 (4.87)	648 (2.42)	919 (3.08)	3035 (9.03)	1582 (6.79)	1849 (7.34)	2509 (6.51)	1080 (4.29)	1347 (4.87)
TOTAL	42609 (100.0)	26787 (100.0)	29797 (100.0)	33602 (100.0)	23305 (100.0)	25193 (100.0)	38541 (100.0)	25175 (100.0)	27676 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

TABLE 3.5 : CLASSIFICATION OF HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING TO INCOME GROUPS

INCOME GROUP (Rs.)	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
> 20000	10	94	104	10	112	122	20	206	226
	(19.61)	(43.32)	(38.81)	(23.81)	(59.89)	(53.28)	(21.51)	(50.99)	(45.47)
20000-40000	20	94	114	20	42	62	40	136	176
	(39.22)	(43.32)	(42.54)	(47.62)	(22.46)	(27.07)	(43.01)	(33.66)	(35.42)
40000-60000	13	17	30	6	20	26	19	37	56
	(25.49)	(7.83)	(11.19)	(14.29)	(10.70)	(11.35)	(20.43)	(9.16)	(11.27)
60000-80000	6	7	13	5	9	14	11	16	27
	(11.76)	(3.23)	(4.85)	(11.90)	(4.81)	(6.12)	(11.83)	(3.96)	(5.43)
80000	2	5	7	1	4	5	3	9	12
	(3.92)	(2.30)	(2.61)	(2.38)	(2.14)	(2.18)	(3.22)	(2.23)	(2.41)
TOTAL	51	217	268	42	187	229	93	404	497
	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)
Average Income	42609	26787	29797	33602	23305	25193	38541	25175	27676

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

(A) AGE : Reviewing the age characteristics of the sample respondents we found that over 50 per cent of the total representatives of different village Panchayats were in the young age group of below forty years and another 30.18 per cent were in the age group 40 to 50 years while only 17 per cent had more than 50 years of age. Thus the average age for Pradhans and members consisted of 43 years and 42 years respectively. Across the districts, around 46.98 per cent Pradhans and 62.62 per cent members in Saharanpur and 50 per cent Pradhans and 43.32 per cent members in Gorakhpur were at the age groups of below 40 years while the proportions of respondents in the relatively higher age groups of above 40 years were reported considerably higher in latter district (55.46 per cent), as compared to former district (40.67 per cent).

(B) CASTE : As indicated earlier that the reservation of seats for the positions of Pradhans and members belonging to different castes was carried out by considering into account the proportions of population of different castes of women in the total population of women in different village Panchayats for women Pradhans and in different constituencies within the village Panchayats for women members. It revealed that the population of backward castes was much higher in both the districts therefore the proportions of women elected as Pradhans as well as members of village Panchayats were relatively much higher from this caste groups as compared to other castes in both the sample districts, though the proportion of elected members from backward castes were reported to be significantly higher in Gorakhpur (48.66 per cent) as compared to

Saharanpur (34.10 per cent), but a marginal differences were noticed existing in the percentage of women Pradhans elected from concerned caste among these districts. The proportion of elected women as Pradhans as well as members from Muslim community were accounted relatively higher in Saharanpur 27.24 per cent) than in Gorakhpur (4.80 per cent) but only 7.46 per cent women in former district and 15.72 per cent women in latter districts were elected as the representatives of different PRI's from general castes. The representation of women from Scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in different village Panchayats was estimated to be around one third in Gorakhpur and 31 per cent in Saharanpur. In all, the advantages of initiating reservation policy for women under the Panchayati Raj System had gone mainly in favour of backward and scheduled caste/tribes caste groups of women but a little opportunities had been provided to the upper Hindu women to associate themselves in the village Panchayats. This could be mainly due to the fact that latter groups of women were possessing limited freedom to participate in different social, economic, cultural and political activities from their family as compared to women of other castes. Because the backward social systems, and the cultural evils were found greatly prevailing among the upper caste Hindus families in both the region which was restricting the opportunities of women even to participate in out-door activities of their household at certain extent.

- (C) MARITAL STATUS: Almost all the elected Pradhans as well as members of different village Panchayats were married excepting the case of one woman which elected as the member from backward caste in Gorakhpur was quite young of below 20 years of age and was unmarried. A sizeable proportion (9.05

per cent) of widow women were also found elected as the representatives of village Panchayats. The percentage of such women was estimated at 9.41 per cent among members and 7.52 per cent among Pradhans and it was marginally higher in Saharanpur (9.33 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (8.73 per cent). Inquiring among the local people and the officials of the Block Panchayats about the nature of participation of women in the activities of Panchayats. It was

TABLE 3.6 : PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PRADHANS AND THE MEMBERS

DISCRIPTION	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
CASTE									
(a) SC/ST	14 (27.45)	69 (31.80)	83 (30.97)	14 (33.33)	62 (33.16)	76 (33.19)	28 (30.11)	131 (32.43)	159 (31.99)
(b) Backward	18 (35.29)	74 (34.10)	92 (34.33)	15 (35.71)	91 (48.66)	106 (46.29)	33 (35.48)	165 (40.84)	198 (39.84)
(c) General	3 (5.88)	17 (7.83)	20 (7.46)	10 (23.81)	26 (13.90)	36 (15.72)	13 (13.98)	43 (10.64)	56 (11.27)
(d) Muslims	16 (31.38)	57 (26.27)	73 (27.24)	3 (7.15)	8 (4.28)	11 (4.80)	19 (20.43)	65 (16.09)	84 (16.90)
MARITAL STATUS									
(a) Married	46 (90.20)	197 (90.78)	243 (90.67)	40 (95.24)	168 (89.84)	208 (90.83)	86 (92.47)	365 (90.35)	451 (90.74)
(b) Unmarried	-	-	-	-	1 (0.53)	1 (0.44)	-	1 (0.25)	1 (0.20)
(c) Widow	5 (9.80)	20 (9.22)	25 (9.33)	2 (4.76)	118 (9.63)	20 (8.73)	7 (7.53)	38 (9.40)	45 (9.06)
Average Size of Family	6.39	5.24	5.46	5.98	5.53	5.61	6.20	5.37	5.53
Average Age (Years)	44	40	41	43	44	44	43	42	42

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

Reported that they were generally well participating in the activities of village Panchayats and Block Panchayats and also in the implementation and supervision of different rural development programmes and welfare schemes at village Panchayat levels than the married women (Table 3.6).

(D) **EDUCATIONAL LEVEL:** Considering the analysis related to the educational characteristics of the elected Pradhans and members we found that a large proportion of them were illiterate (62.58 per cent) and another 18.91 per cent were possessing only functional literacy while only 10.66 per cent women had primary level of education followed by 8 per cent of them with above middle and secondary level of education and only one unmarried women member in Gorakhpur was possessing degree level education. Among women members, the proportions of illiterate women stood for 71.43 per cent and 68.45 in Saharanpur and Gorakhpur respectively while the illiterate Pradhans in latter districts were only 11.91 per cent as against 45.10 per cent in the former district. Also, the proportions of women which had availed above primary level of education were significantly larger in Gorakhpur (40.48 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (27.45 per cent), even the women Pradhan with above secondary education were significantly higher in former district (9.52 per cent) than the latter one (3.92 per cent). Though it can be pointed out that over and above, the illiterates were mainly dominating in most of the village Panchayats of both the districts but the proportion of literate Pradhans as well as members were relatively higher in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur, In spite of the fact that as per official documents of the Government, the overall literacy rate of women

in latter district was estimated to be much higher than in the former district (Table 3.6).

(E) **OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE AND INCOME LEVELS:** Analysing the occupational structure of Pradhans and members before joining the village Panchayats it revealed that a majority of women, both Pradhans (94.62 per cent) as well as members (84.40 per cent) were engaged in the household related non-economic activities as housewives while 3.23 per cent Pradhans and 6.19 per cent members were engaged in the agricultural activities as cultivators. It is very fortunate that 37 women members, comprising 26 women in Saharanpur and 11 women in Gorakhpur who were working as agricultural labourer on the farms of local landlords have received the opportunity to represent village Panchayats. Remaining one woman who elected as a member, was employed with a shop in nearby town before joining the PRI. However, the average monthly income which the employed women were getting before representing PRI's was worked out to be very low at Rs.670 for Pradhans and Rs.402 for members, though both the Pradhans as well as members of Saharanpur were generating relatively higher amount of income as compared to their counterpart in Gorakhpur. Also, the Pradhans were found generating significantly higher income than the members in both the districts.

TABLE 3.7 : EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PRADHANS AND THE MEMBERS

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
ILLITERATE	23 (45.10)	155 (71.43)	178 (66.42)	5 (11.91)	128 (68.45)	133 (58.08)	28 (30.11)	283 (70.05)	311 (62.58)
LITERATE	14 (27.45)	29 (13.36)	43 (16.04)	20 (47.62)	31 (16.58)	51 (22.27)	34 (36.56)	60 (14.85)	94 (18.91)
PRIMARY	7 (13.73)	24 (11.06)	31 (11.57)	9 (21.43)	13 (6.95)	22 (9.61)	16 (17.20)	37 (9.16)	53 (10.66)
MIDDLE	5 (9.80)	7 (3.23)	12 (4.48)	4 (9.52)	7 (3.74)	11 (4.80)	9 (9.68)	14 (3.46)	23 (4.63)
SECONDARY	2 (3.92)	2 (0.92)	4 (1.49)	4 (9.52)	7 (3.74)	11 (4.80)	6 (6.45)	9 (2.23)	15 (3.02)
GRADUATE	-	-	-	-	1 (0.54)	1 (0.44)	-	1 (0.25)	1 (0.20)
TOTAL	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

TABLE 3.8(a): OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE AND INCOME OF THE MEMBER BEFORE AND AFTER REPRESENTING VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

OCCUPATION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS						AVERAGE INCOME (Rs.)					
	SAHARANPUR		GORAKHPUR		TOTAL		SAHARANPUR		GORAKHPUR		TOTAL	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Housewife	181 (83.41)	183 (84.33)	160 (85.57)	148 (79.15)	341 (84.40)	331 (81.94)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cultivator	10 (4.61)	15 (6.91)	15 (8.02)	24 (12.83)	25 (6.19)	39 (9.65)	489	1015	349	471	422	680
Labour	26 (11.98)	19 (8.76)	11 (5.88)	12 (6.42)	37 (9.16)	31 (7.67)	410	525	337	495	389	579
Business				3 (1.60)	-	3 (0.74)	-	-	-	1200	-	1200
Service	-	-	1 (0.53)	-	1 (0.25)	-	-	-	410	-	410	-
TOTAL	217 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	432	741	346	534	402	631

TABLE 3.8(b): OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE AND INCOME OF THE PRADHANS BEFORE AND AFTER REPRESENTING VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

OCCUPATION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS						AVERAGE INCOME (Rs.)					
	SAHARANPUR		GORAKHPUR		TOTAL		SAHARANPUR		GORAKHPUR		TOTAL	
	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After	Before	After
Housewife	48 (94.12)	45 (88.24)	40 (95.24)	39 (92.86)	88 (94.62)	84 (90.32)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cultivator	2 (3.92)	5 (9.80)	1 (2.38)	1 (2.38)	3 (3.23)	6 (6.45)	900	1140	450	500	750	1033
Labour	1 (1.96)	1 (1.96)	1 (2.38)	1 (2.38)	2 (2.15)	2 (2.15)	500	600	600	750	550	675
Business	-	-	-	1 (2.38)	-	1 (1.08)	-	-	-	1450	-	1450
TOTAL	51 (100.0)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	767	1050	525	900	670	1000

PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Significant levels of changes in the work participation rates, occupational pattern and income levels of elected women after representing different village Panchayats have been well visualised in both the districts. Since the work participation rate of Pradhans has increased from 5.38 per cent to 9.68 per cent and for members it has increased from 15.59 per cent to 18.07 per cent after getting the opportunity to represent village Panchayats. However, the participation of women Pradhans as well as members in different economic activities has increased at higher extent in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur. In Saharanpur, three women Pradhans have started

working with the agricultural activities after leaving household related indoor activities. And, the proportion of women members those were working as cultivators has increased from 4.61 per cent to 6.91 per cent while around 27 per cent of them have discontinued to work on the farms of local landlords as labourers. Consequently, in Gorakhpur, the proportions of women those were earlier working as housewife has decreased at 6.50 per cent and it has increased at 5.63 per cent in agricultural activities. In fact 3 women members and one Pradhan of village Panchayats have established own provisional shops and one member have left to work on the basis of wages with the shop after joining the village Panchayats in Gorakhpur.

As the consequences of significant shift in the occupational structure of both Pradhans and members after representing the village Panchayats has also resulted a significant increase in their personal income level. The average monthly income of Pradhans has increased from Rs.670 to Rs.1000, showing an increase of 49.25 per cent while in the case of members it has increased from Rs.420 to Rs.631, showing an increase of 49.63 per cent. The increase of income has been indicated largely in the cases of women those were engaged in agricultural activities in both the districts but the amount of earnings being generated through the establishment of own shops was estimated to be relatively much higher than the agricultural and other occupations. Across the districts, the average monthly income of Pradhans in Saharanpur (71.53 per cent) has increased at much higher level than in Gorakhpur (36.90 per cent). But, the concerned situation was marginally different in the cases of members among these two districts, as the income of members in former district has increased at lower level (54.34 per cent) than the case of latter district (71.43

per cent). This indicates the fact that providing an opportunity to women to represent the village Panchayats has given them at least some degree of freedom to participate in certain economic activities as per their choice and to improve their economic status. These views are further strengthened by the fact that a sizeable number of the Pradhans and members those were earlier unable to move outside their households due to the prevalence of several social and cultural backwardness are currently engaged in agricultural activities, in fact few of them have been able to develop entrepreneurship capability among themselves and have established the small shops. Also, a sizeable proportion of women members have left to engage in low status occupations such as working as agricultural daily wage labourers etc. But a larger proportions of the elected representatives of various village Panchayats are still engaged in looking after their children, old family members and animals and carrying out certain indoor activities of the households. They are lacking the opportunities to participate in different out-door activities even in their family's agricultural and other activities and the freedom to participate in various locally organised social and cultural functions and festivals. The domination of male family members has universally been well recognised in carrying out certain functions of Panchayats and in the implementation and supervision of certain development programmes on behalf of women representatives of various village Panchayats because a larger proportion of women were forced to contest the election of Panchayats by their male family members only with the motive to acquire the expected benefits of representing Panchayats by the women family members rather than for attaining improvement in socio-economic status of the women.

TABLE 3.9 : DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYED PRADHANS AND THE MEMBERS ACCORDING TO
MONTHLY INCOME GROUPS

INCOME GROUPS IN (Rs.)	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Below 500	2 (33.33)	14 (41.17)	16 (40.00)	1 (33.34)	22 (56.41)	23 (54.76)	3 (33.34)	36 (49.32)	39 (47.56)
500 - 1000	1 (16.67)	13 (38.24)	14 (35.00)	1 (33.33)	14 (35.90)	15 (35.72)	2 (22.22)	27 (36.99)	29 (35.37)
1000 +	3 (50.00)	7 (20.59)	10 (25.00)	1 (33.33)	3 (7.69)	4 (9.52)	4 (44.44)	10 (13.69)	14 (17.07)
TOTAL	6 (100.0)	34 (100.0)	40 (100.0)	3 (100.0)	39 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	9 (100.0)	73 (100.0)	82 (100.0)
AVERAGE INCOME	1050	741	787	900	534	560	1000	631	672

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

However, the women who were no way motivated by their family members but desired themselves to represent Panchayats were found getting significant freedom and opportunities to participate in different socio-economic and cultural activities. As a result, the participation of such women in different economic activities and personnel income had increased at significant level in both the districts. In all, around 17 per cent of the employed women representatives of Panchayats consisting 44 per cent Pradhans and 14 per cent members were earning more than Rs.1000 in a month, though the monthly income of around one third of them was estimated to be between Rs.500 and Rs.1000 and 48 per cent of women, who were earlier engaged in agricultural activities as daily wage earners, were in a position to

earn less than Rs.500 in a month after representing Panchayats. However, the proportions of women those were earning above Rs.1000 were noticed significantly higher in Saharanpur (25 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (9.52 per cent). In the lowest earning ranges of below Rs.500 the proportion of women workers were at lower extent in former district than the latter one and the proportion of women Pradhans were constituted significantly higher in larger income ranges while the members were dominating in low income ranges in both the districts. This indicates the fact that the Pradhans were deriving relatively higher economic benefits as compared to members after representing the village Panchayats in both the regions.

PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Further attempting to examine the extent of changes experienced by the women in the participation of different social and regional level political activities after representing Panchayats it revealed that hardly any women was associated with any political parties prior to represent Panchayats but latter only four Pradhans in Gorakhpur have received the opportunity to become the member of national level political parties. However, 3.82 per cent PRI's representatives, consisting 8.60 per cent Pradhans and 2.72 per cent members were associated with the activities of local level social institutions, mainly Mahila Yuvak Mangal Dal, before getting elected as the representatives of village Panchayats. The proportion of Pradhans who were associated different political and social organisations before representing PRI's were significantly higher than the members in both the districts, but among Pradhans, the corresponding ratio was relatively larger in favour of Saharanpur (9.80 per cent) than the Gorakhpur (7.14 per cent). Further we found that 5 Pradhans and 3 members

have been benefitted to associate themselves with different social and political organisations after representing village Panchayats. Significant increase in the participation rate of women Pradhans in different political and social activities has been witnessed in both the districts, 5.88 per cent in Saharanpur and 4.76 per cent in Gorakhpur, but it has declined from 2.77 per cent to 0.92 per cent for members in Saharanpur as against 3.74 per cent increase for their counterpart in Gorakhpur after associating themselves with the village Panchayats.

TABLE 3.10 : PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES BEFORE AND AFTER JOINING PRI's

	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Before joining PRI's	5 (9.80)	6 (2.77)	11 (4.10)	3 (7.14)	5 (2.67)	8 (3.49)	8 (8.60)	11 (2.72)	19 (3.82)
After joining PRI's	8 (15.69)	2 (0.92)	10 (3.73)	5 (11.91)	12 (6.42)	17 (7.43)	13 (13.98)	14 (3.47)	27 (5.43)
Non Participants	38 (74.51)	209 (96.31)	247 (92.17)	34 (80.95)	170 (90.91)	204 (89.08)	72 (77.42)	379 (93.81)	451 (90.75)
TOTAL	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

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CHAPTER IV

PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES OF BLOCK PANCHAYATS

IT HAS BEEN an established belief that ensuring partnership of women with the Panchayats Raj Institutions will certainly enable them to participate effectively and independently in decision making process as of the implementation and initiation of various rural development programmes, social welfare activities and carrying out certain related activities, developing leadership quality, strengthening increasing freedom for participation in different activities and availing certain opportunities according to their choice so as to minimise the traditionally developed ill feelings of prevailing social system which disfavouring women's interests. The committee constituted on the status of women (1974) also recommended that the improvements in socio-economic status and empowerment of women can be best achieved by providing them a special opportunity for participation in the representative structure of local self government and ensuring their active involvement in decision making process.

In view of achieving improvements in socio-economic status of women, the partnership of rural women in grass root political system has been constitutionally assured through introducing a reservation policy in their favour in different tiers of Panchayats. The power envisaged in the Act has provided them an opportunity to

deliberate, debate and decide important policy matters. The involvement and claim of women have also been ensured in the process of planning, policy formulation, execution of rural development programmes, fund allotment for different schemes and programmes and to control and supervise over the activities and functioning of twenty nine Government departments located in rural areas, such as land reforms, agriculture, elementary education, health care, drinking water, sanitation, animal husbandry etc. Representation of women in Panchayati Raj Institutions also provide them an opportunity to take part in public life, social and cultural ceremonies and functions, interact with different sections of rural population, develop personnel and higher level of leadership quality without the consideration of traditional social and cultural barriers and thus to improve their socio-economic and political perceptions.

However, the extent and level of success in achieving improvements in socio-economic and political status of women will mainly determined by the extent of their actual participation in decision making processes on certain policy matters and the kind of role they play in the discussions of the meetings at Panchayat level and actual involvement and devotion in planning for implementations and initiations of development programmes and related welfare activities at village Panchayat level. In the light of these background considerations attempts have been made in the present chapter to analysis the extent and pattern of participation of women Pradhans and members in the functioning, meetings discussions and presenting views on certain issues and the aspects related to decision making process on certain matters in the meetings of Block Panchayats and village Panchayats. Beside this, an assessment is also undertaken to examine the nature and kind of co-operation and co-ordination prevailing among the representatives of different village

Panchayats and the heads and officials of Block Panchayats in the distribution and allotment of various development projects and funds, assisting and solving the problems of women representatives which they complain before the *Pramukh* of Block Panchayats and the general attitude and nature of co-operation maintained by men representatives of the Block Panchayats and village Panchayats with the women representatives of village Panchayats in supporting and solving for different problems which are faced by them in the allotment of schemes and the release of funds from Block Panchayats, providing opportunities in discussions related to policy decision making and to present their problems before the meetings etc.

I. PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETINGS AND ACTIVITIES OF BLOCK PANCHAYATS

The Block Panchayat is the main and important forum for holding meetings of the Members and Pradhans of both Block Panchayats and village Panchayats and the village level extension workers of Government including the officials of the Block Development Office. The meeting is called by the *Pramukh* of Block Panchayats, which is called as BDC (Block Development Committee) at least every quarter of the year. In fact, more numbers of meetings may also be called on certain occasions. Issues related to the formulation identification and planning for initiating and implementation of certain programmes and the matters related to the allotment and distribution of funds for introducing development programmes and distribution of schemes are generally discussed at the meetings of Block Panchayats. Discussions on issues

related to the kinds and nature of problems faced by the Pradhans in the functioning of Panchayats and the implementation and supervision of different development programmes are also generally take place in the BDC meetings. Provisions are also practiced to organise two crop seasons meetings of village level extension workers and the Pradhans respectively during the period of Rabi and kharif crop seasons. The motives behind organising crop seasons meetings in the past have been mainly in terms of providing information to the participants about the kinds of schemes to be introduced for the concerned season for developing agriculture and the methodology to be adopted in this regard and to assess the requirements of seeds fertilisers, pesticides and other agricultural inputs of different village Panchayats.

It was reported by the officials of sample block Panchayats that during the reference period of our study (1999-2000) the B.D.C. meetings were regularly organised as per schedule by the *Pramukhs*. Beside this, three training programmes for women Pradhans and two crop season meetings were also organised in each Block Panchayats of both the districts. However, the numbers of BDC meetings organised in Saharanpur were reported to be significantly much higher than in Gorakhpur.

Dealing with the nature of participation of women representatives of different village Panchayats in the meetings of Block Panchayats we found that the women in Saharanpur were better punctual than in Gorakhpur in attending B.D.C. meetings. Since the proportion of women reported to have participated in atleast some B.D.C. meetings were found comparatively much

larger in the village Panchayats of former district's (86 per cent) than in the latter districts (48 per cent). Since, nine B.D.C. meetings were called during last year in each of the Block Panchayats of both the districts but a majority of Pradhans in Saharanpur (29.41 per cent) had participated in two meetings while in Gorakhpur maximum participants were in one meeting. And, no women representatives of PRI's had participated in any of the B.D.C. meetings which were organised in the Block Panchayats of Saharanpur, in fact the proportion of women reported to have attended more than four meeting were significantly higher in Saharanpur (43.13 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (11.90 per cent).

Participation of women PRI's in the training programmes which were organised at Block Panchayats during last year for providing information and bringing awareness among them about their constitutional duties, and rights as laid down under the Panchayati Raj System, criteria and methodology to be adopted for the implementation of certain development programmes and various related subjects was also indicated very unsatisfactory in the Block Panchayats of both the districts. In both the districts, three training programmes were organised but 43.14 per cent Pradhans in Saharanpur and 40.48 per cent Pradhans in Gorakhpur had not participated any of the training programmes while only 7.84 per cent Pradhans of former district and 7.14 per cent Pradhans of latter district had participated in each of the training programmes. However, the participation of Pradhans in the meetings of crop seasons was visualised at much lower level than it was in the training programmes and B.D.C. meetings. Since around 57 per cent Pradhans of

district Gorakhpur and 55 per cent Pradhans of Saharanpur had never participated in the meeting of crop seasons while only 13.73 per cent respondents of former district and 19.05 per cent respondents of latter district have participated in both the meetings. In all 21 Pradhans, comprising 11 in Saharanpur and 10 in Gorakhpur had never participated in any of the crop season meetings as well as in the training programmes.

TABLE 4.1: PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETINGS OF BLOCK PANCHAYAT

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS	PURPOSE OF MEETINGS AND THE FREQUENCIES OF PARTICIPATION								
	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	BDC	Panchay at Training	Others	BDC	Panchay at Training	Others	BDC	Panchay at Training	Others
NIL	7 (13.73)	22 (43.14)	28 (54.90)	22 (52.38)	17 (40.48)	24 (57.14)	29 (31.18)	39 (41.94)	52 (55.91)
1	7 (13.73)	25 (49.02)	16 (31.37)	9 (21.43)	9 (21.43)	10 (23.81)	16 (17.20)	34 (36.56)	26 (27.96)
2	15 (29.41)	- (13.73)	7 (13.73)	6 (14.29)	13 (30.95)	8 (19.05)	21 (22.58)	13 (13.98)	15 (16.13)
3-4	14 (27.45)	4 (7.84)	- (11.90)	5 (7.14)	3 -	- -	19 (20.43)	7 (7.52)	- -
5-6	7 (13.73)	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	7 (7.53)	- -	- -
7.	1 (1.95)	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	1 (1.08)	- -	- -
TOTAL	51 (100.0)	51 (100.0)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	93 (100.0)

Discussing about the nature, magnitude and frequency of participation of the representatives of village Panchayats in the meetings with the heads and the officials of Block Panchayats it revealed that a significant numbers of women representatives of different village Panchayats were never seen by them either attending the meetings or visiting block office for other official purposes. The Pradhans who represent the meetings were hardly seen sitting in the meetings for its whole duration. In fact, the participation of women representatives in the general discussions and matters related to decision-making subjects was reported to be very marginal. The male representatives were found mainly dominate in the various affairs and functioning of the Panchayats and even in decision making processes and the distribution of development programmes and funds allocation for different purposes to different village Panchayats.

During the initial period of the formation of village Panchayats almost the women Pradhans were seen accompanied by their family members in visiting the Block Panchayats. In fact, the male members started to join their women wards (Pradhans) in the meetings and performing the activities of Panchayats. Even during the reference period of the study, during last year, a very high proportion of (70.73 per cent) the women representative of PRI's were found accompanied either by their male family members or the relatives in visiting Block Panchayats for attending the meetings. However, only 21.95 per cent and 7.32 per cent of them were noticed visiting either alone or with the Pradhans of other village Panchayats to the Block Panchayats, Thus,

the Dependency of women Pradhans over their male family members was revealed largely existing in the cases of making visits to Block office for the purpose of participating meeting in both the districts, but largely in Saharanpur than in Gorakhpur. Since the proportions of women Pradhans visiting to Block Panchayats with their family members for different purposes averages at around 66 per cent for latter district as against 89 per cent for former district.'

TABLE 4.2: NATURE OF VISITS TO BLOCK PANCHAYATS

ACCOMPANIED BY	PURPOSE OF MEETINGS								
	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	BDC	Pan-chayat Training	Others	BDC	Pan-chayat Training	Others	BDC	Pan-chayat Training	Others
Alone	3 (6.82)	4 (13.79)	3 (13.04)	7 (35.00)	8 (32.00)	6 (33.33)	10 (15.63)	12 (22.22)	9 (21.95)
Family Member	33 (75.00)	22 (75.86)	18 (78.26)	10 (50.00)	15 (60.00)	11 (61.11)	43 (67.19)	37 (68.52)	29 (70.73)
Others	8 (18.18)	3 (10.34)	2 (8.70)	3 (15.00)	2 (8.00)	1 (5.56)	11 (17.19)	5 (9.26)	3 (7.32)
TOTAL	44 (100.0)	29 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	25 (100.0)	18 (100.0)	64 (100.0)	54 (100.0)	41 (100.0)

It may be pointed out that even after the association of women members in the functioning and different activities of Panchayats for last over five years the independency culture and confidence could not be developed among themselves either for the purpose of visiting alone to the Block Panchayats or to move outside household independently even for a shorter distances. Despite the fact that a majority of the village Panchayats are not located far away from the Block Panchayats and the people of most of the villages have the well accessibility to road transport facilities. Since the analysis revealed that around 24 per cent of the village Panchayats in each districts are located at the distance of only below 5 kms from the respective Block Panchayats while the Pradhans of another 28 per cent village Panchayats, comprising 35.29 per cent of Saharanpur and 19.05 per cent of Gorakhpur have to cover a distance of 5 to 10 kms to reach the Block Panchayats while only 17.65 per cent village Panchayats of Saharanpur as against 21.43 per cent village Panchayats of Gorakhpur are located at the distance of above 15 kms. from the Block Office. The road facilities are well developed in both the districts. As the population of different village Panchayats has to cover on an average 1.25 km to reach the nearest available road facility. Also the roads are passing through linking around 42.16 per cent and 43.23 per cent village Panchayats of districts Saharanpur and Gorakhpur respectively while only the population of 3.22 per cent have the access to road facilities at the distance of above 5 kms. Thus, it could be well articulated the fact that it is neither the problem of long distances to cover to reach the Block office nor the problem of accessibility to roads and the availability of transport facilities but it is the problem of traditionally developed backward socio-cultural system which

limiting the scope of women to move outside their village even for a shorter distances and purposes such as attending the meetings of Block Panchayats.

TABLE 4.3 : DISTANCE OF VILLAGE PANCHAYATS FROM THE NEAREST ROAD FACILITY

DISTANCE (Km.)	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Within the Village	18 (35.30)	95 (43.78)	113 (42.16)	16 (38.10)	83 (44.38)	99 (43.23)	34 (36.56)	178 (44.06)	212 (42.66)
Upto 5 Km.	30 (58.82)	116 (53.46)	146 (54.48)	25 (59.52)	98 (52.41)	123 (53.71)	55 (59.14)	214 (52.97)	269 (54.12)
5 +	3 (5.88)	6 (2.76)	9 (3.36)	1 (2.38)	6 (3.21)	7 (3.06)	4 (4.30)	12 (2.97)	16 (3.22)
TOTAL	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)
Average Distance	1.67	1.14	1.24	1.24	1.25	1.25	1.47	1.19	1.25

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITIES OF BLOCK PANCHAYATS

The *Pramukh* and the officials of Block Panchayats reported that at the initial periods of first two to three meetings of Block Panchayats which organised immediately after the formation of village Panchayats the family members, mainly husbands of the Pradhans started sitting in the meetings and taking participation in the discussions on certain issues of Panchayat activities and in the presentation of problems which were experienced and faced in successfull implementation of certain schemes, such as Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, on behalf of women Pradhans. As a result, the confusion was largely prevailing regarding to recognise the actual Pradhans among the participants in the meetings. But latter the male Pradhans had raised objections against the participation of the family members of the women Pradhans and thereafter the women Pradhans started participating in the meetings independently. In the meetings and training programmes those organised during the period of last four years, the women Pradhans were seen silently sitting and listening to the male Pradhans and the *Pramukh* of Block Panchayats. Only some of the widow women and old women with around above 50 years of their age were noticed occasionally raising their voice in the discussions mainly on issues related to the distribution of schemes and development programmes and fund allocations among the different village Panchayats. Significant numbers of women Pradhans were seen hesitating even in giving proper reply on inquiring about certain matters related to the present progress of programme implementation and Panchayat activities from them by the *Pramukh* of Block Panchayats. The male family members of the

women Pradhans were generally noticed performing the official functions of the Pradhans at the Block Panchayat level.

The analysis of our sample data also revealed that among the women Pradhans participating in the meetings of Block Panchayats, around 63 per cent of them do not participate in any discussions on issues related to policy decisions. Only widow Pradhans were found do participate in the discussions and presenting problems which they were experiencing in the initiation and implementation of development programmes in their respective village Panchayats while two Pradhans were found regularly participate in the discussions on certain issues of training programmes and the meetings of crop seasons. Across the sample districts the proportion of Pradhans who generally participates in the discussions on matters related to decision making process are indicated to be significantly larger in Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur. This is particularly due to the fact that the proportion of women participating in different outdoor activities, including economic activities and social functions and the activities of different political parties and social organisations were comparably higher in former district than the latter one. Increasing participating of women Pradhan in these activities have certainly improved their level of self confidence and independency culture in terms of presenting views in the male dominated gatherings. Thus, it may be pointed out that providing an opportunity to women to engage themselves in different socio-economic and political activities can certainly bring out a favourable change in their participation in different decision making processes, along with improving their socio-economic status and empowerment.

It seems that in men dominated meetings of Block Panchayats the women Pradhans lack the opportunities of presenting their views on certain issues even if they fortunately desire to participate in the matters of discussions. Our analysis depicted the fact that a large proportion of women Pradhans (72.22 per cent) find inadequate chance to speak or participate in the discussions of the meetings. However, the proportion of women Pradhans getting the opportunity to participate in the discussions and matters related to decision making processes are found relatively at higher extent in Gorakhpur (34.37 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (22.50 per cent). But, over and above the women with below primary level of education and illiterates are found largely lacking the opportunities of participation in expressing their views in the meetings than the women Pradhans with middle and above

TABLE 4.4: PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION OF THE MEETINGS OF BLOCK PANCHAYATS

PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION	PURPOSE OF MEETINGS								
	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	BDC	Pan-chayat Training	Others	BDC	Pan-chayat Training	Others	BDC	Panchayat Training	Others
NIL	33 (64.71)	22 (43.14)	17 (33.34)	7 (16.67)	14 (33.34)	9 (17.65)	40 (43.01)	36 (38.71)	26 (27.96)
Regularly	- (1.96)	1	-	4 (9.52)	1 (2.38)	2 (4.76)	4 (4.01)	2 (2.15)	2 (2.15)
Casually	11 (21.57)	6 (11.76)	6 (11.76)	9 (21.43)	10 (23.81)	7 (16.67)	20 (21.51)	16 (17.20)	13 (13.98)
TOTAL PARTICIPANT	44 (87.27)	29 (56.86)	23 (45.10)	20 (47.62)	25 (59.52)	18 (42.86)	64 (68.82)	54 (58.06)	41 (44.08)
TOTAL SAMPLE	51 (100.0)	51 (100.0)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	93 (100.0)

secondary level of education. Since over 83 per cent of women Pradhans having above secondary level of education and almost the women Pradhan with middle level educated have reported that they find adequate opportunities to speak on any matters of discussions and policy issues. In fact, all the women Pradhans with above middle level education are found getting adequate opportunity and freedom for presentation of views in the meetings of Block Panchayats in district Saharanpur (Table 4.5).

TABLE 4.5 : EXTENT OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPRESSING VIEWS AND PRESENT PROBLEMS IN THE MEETINGS

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Illiterate	1 (5.88)	16 (94.12)	17 (100.0)	-	5 (100.0)	5 (100.0)	1 (4.55)	21 (95.45)	22 (100.0)
	2 (18.18)	9 (81.82)	11 (100.0)	2 (13.33)	13 (86.67)	15 (100.0)	4 (15.38)	22 (84.62)	26 (100.0)
Literate	1 (14.29)	6 (85.71)	7 (100.0)	4 (66.67)	2 (33.33)	6 (100.0)	5 (38.46)	8 (61.54)	13 (100.0)
	3 (100.0)	- (100.0)	3 (100.0)	2 (100.0)	- (100.0)	2 (100.0)	5 (100.0)	- (100.0)	5 (100.0)
Primary	2 (100.0)	- (100.0)	2 (100.0)	3 (75.00)	1 (25.00)	4 (100.0)	5 (83.33)	1 (16.67)	6 (100.0)
	TOTAL	9 (22.50)	31 (77.50)	40 (100.0)	11 (34.37)	21 (65.63)	32 (100.0)	20 (27.78)	52 (72.22)
									72 (100.0)

Enquiring about the kinds of reasons which were restricting the scope of women Pradhans to participate in the discussions of meeting we found that a majority of

(37.80 per cent) the respondents had complained that the chairpersons do not provide any opportunity to them in this regard. A second majority of women Pradhans (31.71 per cent) were found lacking these opportunities due to the domination of male participants in almost the affairs of the meetings while remaining 30.49 per cent Pradhans, 31.91 from Saharanpur and 28.57 per cent from Gorakhpur had complained that they were lacking the information of the agenda and matters of discussions well in advance of the meetings.

TABLE 4.6: REASONS FOR NOT GETTING CHANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	REASONS FOR NOT GETTING CHANCE								TOTAL	
	Not given opportunity by the Chair		Domination of Male Pradhan		Lacking Prior knowledge of Agenda for Discussion		TOTAL			
	Saharnpur	Gorakhpur	Saharanpur	Gorakhpur	Saharanpur	Gorakhpur	Saharanpur	Gorakhpur		
Illiterate	11 (42.31)	2 (22.22)	7 (26.92)	3 (33.33)	8 (30.77)	4 (44.45)	26 (100.0)	9 (100.0)	35	
Literate	4 (30.77)	9 (45.00)	5 (38.46)	6 (30.00)	4 (30.77)	5 (25.00)	13 (100.0)	20 (100.0)	33	
Primary	2 (25.00)	2 (50.00)	3 (37.50)	1 (25.00)	3 (37.50)	1 (25.00)	8 (100.0)	4 (100.0)	12	
Middle	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Secondary and Above	-	1 (50.00)	-	1 (50.00)	-	-	-	2 (100.0)	2	
TOTAL	17 (36.18)	14 (40.00)	15 (31.91)	11 (31.43)	15 (31.91)	10 (28.57)	47 (100.0)	35 (100.0)	82	

CO-OPERATION AND ATTITUDE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

It has universally been recognised that the women find discriminatory treatment from men in availing different opportunities and benefits both at household level and outside households due to prevailing certain evils of social and cultural systems in rural areas. As a result, the women are still not in a position to improve their socio-economic status as par to their men counterpart. Further, the intervention of Government to maximise the partnership in political system through introducing the reservation policy for women in different tiers of Panchayats under the Panchayati Raj System is thought to be an important instrumental measure for minimising the ill feelings and unfavourable attitude of people, which generated by our social system, against women at certain extent.

In this light we have further attempted to examine at what extent the women Pradhans are getting the co-operation and support from the representatives of Block Panchayats and other village Panchayats on different issues and matters such as in the process of decision making for the distribution of funds and allotment of development programmes, presenting views and problems as experienced in implementing development schemes in their concerned Panchayats in the meetings as well as outside the meetings of Block Panchayats among the other participants.

TABLE 4.7: PERCEPTION ABOUT THE COOPERATION OF THE BLOCK PRAMUKH

DISCRIPTION	EXCELLENT			SATISFACTORY			UN-SATISFACTORY			TOTAL		
	Saharpur	Gorakhpur	Total	Saharpur	Gorakhpur	Total	Saharpur	Gorakhpur	Total	Saharpur	Gorakhpur	Total
General Cooperation/ Behaviour/ Attitude	10 (19.61)	14 (33.33)	24 (25.81)	22 (43.14)	17 (40.48)	39 (41.93)	19 (37.25)	11 (26.19)	30 (32.26)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Informing about new schemes	1 (1.96)	8 (19.05)	9 (9.68)	18 (35.29)	15 (35.71)	33 (35.48)	32 (62.75)	19 (45.24)	51 (54.84)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Allocation and Release of Funds	2 (3.92)	2 (4.76)	4 (4.30)	12 (23.53)	18 (42.86)	30 (32.26)	37 (72.55)	22 (52.38)	59 (63.44)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Sanctioning Projects	2 (3.92)	4 (9.52)	6 (6.45)	17 (33.33)	21 (50.00)	38 (40.86)	32 (62.75)	17 (40.48)	49 (52.69)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Listening your Problems	13 (25.49)	17 (40.48)	30 (32.26)	17 (33.33)	15 (35.71)	32 (34.41)	21 (41.18)	10 (23.81)	31 (33.33)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Helping in Presenting matters in the Meeting	1 (1.96)	3 (7.14)	4 (4.30)	14 (27.45)	14 (33.33)	28 (30.11)	36 (70.59)	25 (59.53)	61 (65.59)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Helping in objections raised by Fellow Participants	-	4 (9.52)	4 (4.30)	7 (13.73)	15 (35.72)	22 (23.66)	44 (86.27)	23 (54.76)	67 (72.04)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Providing Chance in decision making	1 (1.96)	2 (4.76)	3 (3.23)	11 (21.57)	14 (33.33)	25 (26.88)	39 (76.47)	26 (61.91)	65 (69.89)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
AVERAGE TOTAL	4 (7.84)	7 (16.67)	11 (11.83)	15 (29.41)	16 (38.09)	31 (33.33)	32 (62.75)	19 (45.24)	51 (54.84)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)

CO-OPERATION AND ATTITUDE OF THE BLOCK PRAMUKH

Enquiring among the Pradhans about their perceptions regarding the kinds and extent of co-operation they generally find from the Block Pramukhs it revealed that on an average, significantly a larger proportion of the respondents (54.84 per cent) have experienced a discriminatory attitude of Pramukh against them mainly in matter related to providing protection in the cases of objections raised by other participants on the views expressed by them in the meetings (72.04 per cent), followed by helping in presenting certain matters in the meetings and outside meeting before them (65.65 per cent), providing an opportunity to participate in decision making matters (69.89 per cent) and the allocation of funds and various development programmes to them and, around one third of the Pradhans, comprising 37.25 per cent in Saharanpur and 26.19 per cent in Gorakhpur, were dissatisfied with the general co-operation and attitude of Block Pramukh. However, very small proportion of Pradhans (11.83 per cent), comprising 16.67 per cent and 7.84 per cent respectively of Gorakhpur and Saharanpur were finding very excellent co-operation from the Pramukh in all respects, mainly in matters related to listening their problems carefully and solving problems (32.26 per cent), Co-operating on different matters of Panchayat activities (25.81 per cent) and providing detailed information about the types of new schemes to be introduced in different Panchayats (9.68 per cent) while around one third of the women Pradhans reported that they find satisfactory co-operation and the attitude of Pramukh mainly in sanctioning and distribution of certain development programmes among different village Panchayats and in performing Panchayat level formalities for certain subjects and informing about the

kinds and numbers of new schemes to be implemented in different villages in the future.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE BLOCK OFFICIALS

Around half of the total women, comprising 50.98 per cent in Saharanpur and 47.62 per cent in Gorakhpur were not satisfied with the officials of Block Panchayats, largely in matters of getting co-operation and assistance in fulfilling certain basic requirements and in fulfilling the formalities for preparing proposals in relation to certain development programmes which are latter to be sanctioned to the village Panchayats (60 per cent) followed by getting information about the arrival of funds for introducing development schemes (58.06 per cent) and the new schemes (51.61 per cent).

However, only 8.60 per cent Pradhans have reported that they find excellence co-operation from the officials of Block Panchayats in performing different functions and providing certain information and sanctioning of the development project to their village Panchayats. The proportions of women Pradhans which were somewhat satisfied with the conducts and co-operation on certain matters of Block officials were estimated to be 40.86 per cent, consisting of 41.18 per cent in Saharanpur and 40.48 per cent in Gorakhpur.

TABLE 4.8: PERCEPTION ABOUT THE COOPERATION OF BLOCK OFFICIALS

DISCRI- PTION	EXCELLENT			SATISFACTORY			UN- SATISFACTORY			TOTAL		
	Saharapur	Gorakhpur	Total	Saharapur	Gorakhpur	Total	Saharapur	Gorakhpur	Total	Saharapur	Gorakhpur	Total
Providing Co-operation	6 (11.77)	7 (16.67)	13 (13.98)	31 (60.78)	21 (50.00)	52 (55.91)	14 (27.45)	14 (33.33)	28 (30.11)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Providing Information about new schemes	3 (5.88)	6 (14.28)	9 (9.68)	22 (43.14)	14 (33.33)	36 (38.71)	26 (50.98)	22 (52.39)	48 (51.61)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Helping in Project/ Programme Preparation	1 (1.96)	4 (9.52)	5 (5.38)	14 (27.45)	18 (42.86)	32 (34.41)	36 (70.59)	20 (47.62)	56 (60.21)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Information about funds Arrival	3 (5.88)	5 (11.90)	8 (8.60)	18 (35.29)	13 (30.96)	31 (33.34)	30 (58.83)	24 (57.14)	54 (58.06)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Providing guidance/ Suggestions for implementation of Project	5 (9.80)	2 (4.76)	7 (7.53)	21 (41.18)	18 (42.86)	39 (41.93)	25 (49.02)	22 (52.38)	47 (50.54)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
AVERAGE TOTAL	4 (7.84)	5 (11.90)	8 (8.60)	21 (41.18)	17 (40.48)	38 (40.86)	26 (50.98)	20 (47.62)	47 (50.54)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)

TABLE 4.9: PERCEPTION ABOUT THE COOPERATION OF MALE PRADHANS

DISCRI- PTION	EXCELLENT			SATISFACTORY			UN- SATISFACTORY			TOTAL		
	Saharapur	Gorakhpur	Total	Saharapur	Gorakhpur	Total	Saharapur	Gorakhpur	Total	Saharapur	Gorakhpur	Total
Providing Co-Operation in pursuing problems	5 (9.80)	7 (16.67)	12 (12.90)	38 (74.51)	22 (52.38)	60 (64.52)	8 (15.69)	13 (30.95)	21 (22.58)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Supporting in Discussions	2 (3.92)	8 (19.05)	10 (10.75)	24 (47.06)	18 (42.86)	42 (45.16)	25 (49.02)	16 (38.09)	41 (44.09)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Supporting in Allotment of Funds/Schemes	1 (3.92)	3 (7.14)	3 (5.38)	12 (23.53)	14 (33.33)	26 (27.96)	37 (72.55)	25 (59.53)	62 (66.66)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Information about the arrival of new schemes	5 (9.80)	14 (33.33)	19 (20.43)	22 (43.14)	18 (42.86)	40 (43.01)	24 (47.06)	10 (23.81)	34 (36.56)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
General Behaviour/ Attitude	22 (43.14)	20 (47.62)	42 (45.16)	17 (33.33)	16 (38.09)	33 (35.48)	12 (23.53)	6 (14.29)	18 (19.36)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Help in visiting Govt. Deptt.	1 (1.96)	3 (7.14)	4 (4.30)	17 (33.33)	15 (35.72)	32 (34.41)	33 (64.71)	24 (57.14)	57 (61.29)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
Solving Existing Problems in Programme implementation	1 (1.96)	2 (4.76)	3 (3.23)	16 (31.37)	11 (26.19)	27 (29.03)	34 (66.67)	29 (69.05)	63 (67.74)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)
AVERAGE TOTAL	5 (9.80)	8 (19.05)	13 (13.98)	21 (41.18)	16 (38.09)	37 (39.78)	25 (49.02)	18 (42.86)	43 (46.24)	51 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	93 (100.0)

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE MALE PRADHANS

Further, it revealed that a sizeable proportion of women Pradhans (46.24 per cent) both in Gorakhpur 42.86 per cent) and Saharanpur (49.02 per cent) were not finding any co-operation and assistance from the male Pradhans in solving certain problems which they face in performing different activities at the Block Panchayat level. Significantly a large proportion of women Pradhans (67.74 per cent) had the perceptions that the men Pradhans do not co-operate in inquiring about the kinds of approach to be adopted in successfully implementation of certain development programmes followed by 66.66 per cent women Pradhans reported that they hardly receive any support from their men counterpart in the allotment of schemes and funds from the Block Panchayats while a lowest per cent of them (19.36 per cent) had shown dissatisfaction over the behaviour and conduct of male Pradhans. However, only 13.98 per cent women Pradhans, comprising 19.05 per cent from Gorakhpur and 9.80 per cent women Pradhans, had reported that they always find excellent co-operation from Men Pradhans from the point of view of providing assistance in solving their problems which generally occurred in performing certain activities at the Block level.

TABLE 4.10 : PATTERN OF CO-ORDINATION AMONG THE WOMEN PRADHANS

MATTERS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Problems experienced in programme implementation	3 (5.80)	48 (94.12)	51 (100.0)	4 (9.52)	38 (90.48)	42 (100.0)	7 (7.53)	86 (92.47)	93 (100.0)
Issues to be raised collectively in the meeting	5 (9.80)	46 (90.20)	51 (100.0)	4 (9.52)	38 (90.48)	42 (100.0)	9 (9.68)	34 (90.32)	93 (100.0)
For co-Operation in Policy issues	2 (3.92)	49 (96.08)	51 (100.0)	1 (2.38)	41 (97.62)	42 (100.0)	3 (3.23)	90 (96.77)	93 (100.0)
Progress of the Development Schemes	14 (27.45)	37 (72.55)	51 (100.0)	13 (30.95)	29 (69.05)	42 (100.0)	27 (29.03)	66 (70.97)	93 (100.0)
Household Related Matters	15 (29.41)	36 (70.59)	51 (100.0)	12 (18.57)	30 (71.43)	42 (100.0)	27 (29.03)	66 (70.97)	93 (100.0)
Average Total	8 (15.69)	43 (84.31)	51 (100.0)	7 (16.67)	35 (83.33)	42 (100.0)	15 (16.13)	78 (83.87)	93 (100.0)

EXTENT OF CO-ORDINATION AMONG WOMEN PRADHANS

With the assumption that strengthening co-operation and motivating women for discussions on certain issues and subjects in collective manner through making their groups outside meetings could be a instrumental measure for developing self confidence, leadership quality and thus mitigating the problems of hesitations in expressing views confidently among themselves thereby to achieve improvements in their nature of participation in certain issues of discussions, including in matter

related to policy decisions in the male dominated gatherings and meetings of Block Panchayats, we have further attempted to examine about the pattern and nature of co-operation is prevailing among the women Pradhans in making efforts in these underlined matters. Analysing the responses of our respondents we found that the women Pradhans were rarely making any initiatives to consult each others outside the meetings of Block Panchayats for the purpose to discuss about the kinds of problems they have been facing in performing the activities of village Panchayats, implementation of development programmes and related issues. Since only 16.13 per cent of the Pradhan were observed meeting each other mainly for discussing about the household related matters and enquiring about the type of development programmes they have been introducing in their concerned village Panchayats. However, only 3.23 per cent of the respondents have reported that they also discuss about building co-operation and supporting each others on certain issues of discussions. The proportions of Pradhans discussing separately on issues related to problems which they have been experiencing in the programmes implementation and supervision of development programmes were reported to be significantly higher in Gorakhpur (9.52 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (5.88 per cent). The discussions of around 10 per cent of Pradhans in each of the districts take place over the issues of approaching collectively for certain policy matters while around 31 per cent Pradhans of Gorakhpur and 27 per cent Pradhans of Saharanpur discuss about the progress of the implementation of different development programmes in their concerned Panchayats.

TABLE 4.11 : KINDS OF PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS AT THE BLOCK LEVEL

TYPE OF PROBLEMS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Allotment of Schemes	27 (52.94)	24 (47.06)	51 (100.0)	24 (57.14)	18 (42.86)	42 (100.0)	51 (54.84)	42 (45.16)	93 (100.0)
Allotment of Funds	22 (43.14)	29 (56.86)	51 (100.0)	27 (64.29)	15 (35.71)	42 (100.0)	49 (52.69)	44 (47.31)	93 (100.0)

Lastly, inquiring about the kinds of problems that the women Pradhans were generally experiencing from the official of Block Panchayats, it revealed that the women Pradhans lacked adequate information regarding the arrival of new development schemes, type of programmes which are to be implemented in different villages and the kind of procedure adopted for the identification of village Panchayats to be for the allotment of different development programmes from the part of the officials of the Block Panchayats. Marginalisation of women Pradhans in the distribution of various development programmes has also been reported by 54.84 per cent respondents, comprising 57.14 per cent from Gorakhpur as against 52.94 per cent from Saharanpur. The Pradhans also complained that the Block officials unnecessarily devote longer time in the allotment of schemes for which they are compelled to visit the Block office frequently. However, the proportion of women Pradhans facing problems in getting timely release of funds for implementing certain programmes were indicated comparatively at lower extent than those were facing problems in the allotment of different development programmes. Since about 53 per cent women Pradhans, comprising 64.29 per cent in Gorkahpur and 43.14 per cent

in Saharanpur have complained against the official of Block Panchayats that they create certain problems in the allotment and release of funds for undertaking development programmes for their village Panchayats.

CHAPTER V

PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITIES OF VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

SINCE the decision for organising the meetings of Block Panchayats and the agenda and matters to be discussed among the participants is undertaken with the mutual understanding of Block Pramukh and the Block Development office. The information regarding the purpose of holding meetings and its schedule to the Pradhans of different village Panchayats and other members of B.D.C. is provided by the members of Block Panchayats. Accordingly, the meetings of village Panchayats are to be organised by the Pradhans through consulting the Village Development Officer regarding the schedules and matters to be discussed in the meetings. As per the provision, these all informations has also to be provided to each of the representatives of PRI and the local people of concerned village Panchayat before the schedule of holding the meetings.

Considering into account about the prevailing pattern of organising meetings in different village Panchayats it was noticed that there were a significant differences in the numbers and frequencies of meetings organised for different purposes by the sample village Panchayats in both the districts. However, every village Panchayats had organised at least one meeting, excepting the case of one village Panchayat of Saharanpur had not organised any meeting during 1999-2000. Significantly a larger numbers of village Panchayats (66.67 per cent), comprising 80.95 per cent in

Gorakhpur and 54.90 per cent in Saharanpur, had organised the meetings of Panchayats for matters related to the construction of toilets, distribution of hand pumps, identification of beneficiaries for covering under the old age pension scheme and matters related to introducing telephone facilities. The second major motive for organising the meetings was reported for the identification of beneficiaries to be covered under the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana in almost the village Panchayats (99 per cent), though a highest majority of PRI's (53.76 per cent) had organised one meeting followed by two meetings (37.63 per cent). Beside this the village Panchayats had also organised meetings for the purposes such as the implementation of IRDP, construction of Panchayat Bhavans and the distribution of hand pumps, old age pension, house allotment under the Indira Avas Yojana, matters related to primary schools and assessing the financial situations of the village Panchayats. Meetings related to the implementation and initiation of IRDP were held in about 65 per cent of the village Panchayats, but over 54 per cent of the Panchayats had organised only one meeting in this regard. However, a smallest proportions of village Panchayats (7 per cent) in Gorakhpur have only called the meetings for assessing the situation of agricultural production.

It was well recognised in most of the village Panchayats that the problem of groupism which was formed on the basis of castes and accordingly to the political affiliation of local population, initially during pre-election period was still largely existing and creating enormous problems in the proper functioning of the Panchayats and its activities. The opposition groups of the people of women Pradhans in almost the village Panchayats were reported unnecessarily impose

objections even in the matters of initiating welfare programmes. Therefore, a majority of the Pradhans were found do not invite them in the meetings.

The village Panchayats were found using differential modes and the methodologies for informing the general public about the purpose and schedule of holding the meetings of Panchayats. It revealed that significantly a highest numbers of village Panchayats (63.44 per cent), comprising 88.10 per cent in Gorakhpur and 43.14 per cent in Saharanpur, were practicing to invite and inform the people through village peon followed by 21.51 per cent through making door-to-door visits by the members of village Panchayats and 14.05 per cent through announcing in the local festivals and social ceremonies.

PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETINGS

Irregularities of women in general and the women representatives of PRI's in particular were quite prevalent in attending the meetings in different village Panchayats of both the districts. However, the women Pradhans were found very regular and punctual in attending each of the meetings of village Panchayats along with their male family members because they have to head the Panchayats for fulfilling certain formalities, such as signing on several documents and decisions undertaken on certain issues in the meetings. But all the functions and duties of women Pradhans were mostly performed by their male family members in the meetings. It was reported that the women members of PRI's hardly take any interest in attending the meetings though their male family members generally use to

TABLE 5.1 : PATTERN AND FREQUENCIES OF MEETINGS OF THE VILLAGE PANCHAYATS FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES

PURPOSE OF MEETING	NUMBER OF MEETING ORGANISED BY PANCHAYATS														
	SAHARANPUR					GORAKHPUR					TOTAL				
	1	2	3	None	Total Sample	1	2	3	None	Total Sample	1	2	3	None	Total Sample
JRY	28 (64.80)	17 (33.34)	5 (9.80)	1 (1.86)	51 (100.0)	22 (52.38)	18 (42.86)	2 (4.76)	-	42 (100.0)	50 (53.76)	35 (37.03)	7 (7.53)	1 (1.86)	93 (100.0)
Construction of Panchayat Bhawan	9 (17.66)	3 (5.83)	-	39 (76.47)	51 (100.0)	5 (11.90)	1 (2.38)	-	36 (85.72)	42 (100.0)	14 (15.05)	4 (4.38)	-	75 (88.65)	93 (100.0)
Implementation Of Indra Awas Yojana	14 (27.45)	9 (17.66)	-	28 (54.96)	51 (100.0)	11 (26.19)	2 (4.76)	-	29 (89.05)	42 (100.0)	25 (26.88)	11 (11.83)	-	57 (81.28)	93 (100.0)
IRDP	25 (49. 02)	7 (13. 73)	-	19 (37. 25)	51 (0.0)	25 (59. 52)	3 (7.1 4)	-	14 (33. 34)	42 (0.0)	50 (76)	10 (76)	-	33 (34. 48)	93 (10. 0.0)
School Matters	9 (17.65)	5 (9.80)	1 (1.96)	36 (70.59)	51 (100.0)	8 (19.05)	6 (14.28)	-	28 (66.67)	42 (100.0)	17 (18.28)	11 (11.82)	1 (1.06)	64 (68.82)	93 (100.0)
Income and Expenditure matters	6 (11.77)	2 (3.92)	-	43 (84.31)	51 (100.0)	8 (19.05)	3 (7.14)	-	31 (73.81)	42 (100.0)	14 (15.05)	5 (5.38)	-	74 (78.57)	93 (100.0)
Agricultural Purpose	-	-	-	-	-	2 (4.76)	-	1 (2.38)	39 (92.86)	42 (100.0)	2 (2.16)	-	1 (1.06)	90 (86.77)	93 (100.)
Providing Handpump/Toilet/ Pension/Telephone Facilities	28 (54.80)	5 (9.80)	-	18 (35.30)	51 (100.0)	34 (80.95)	6 (14.28)	-	2 (4.76)	42 (100.0)	62 (66.67)	11 (11.83)	-	20 (21.58)	93 (100.0)

participate only in some important meeting which they understand beneficial for their personal interest.

Further, analysis has been attempted to examine the participation rate of different categories of population i.e., members of concerned village Panchayats, men and women among general public, in the meetings of village Panchayats which were organised for different purposes during last year. Average participation rate of all groups of people together in the meetings was worked out at 13.24 per cent which was significantly much higher for men (21.64 per cent) as compared to women population (3.21 per cent). As indicated already that all the women Pradhans were regularly participating in the meetings but the participation of both men as well as women members of different village Panchayats was noticed very un-satisfactory, since only 50.00 per cent members in Saharanpur and 53.85 per cent members in Gorakhpur were noted generally participating in the meetings. The members, both women and men, which were no way participating meetings were reported mainly from the opposition groups of the Pradhans of different village Panchayats. The lowest participation in the meetings was observed in the cases of general public in both the districts. It was as low at 15.01 per cent in Saharanpur, as against 53.85 per cent in Gorakhpur. Overall participation of local people including women segments was, however, observed significantly at higher level in Saharanpur (15.49 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (10.86 per cent). But, the participation of both women Pradhans as well as women members of different village Panchayats was

TABLE 5.2 : PARTICIPATION RATES OF PEOPLE IN THE MEETINGS

DESCRIPTION	Pradhan (Women)	SAHARANPUR									
		MEMBERS			GENERAL PUBLIC			TOTAL			
		MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	
PER PANCHAYAT AVERAGE POPULATION OF VOTERS	51	8	4	12	470	396	866	478	400	878	
AVERAGE ATTENDANCE IN THE MEETINGS	51	4	2	6	117	13	130	121	15	136	
RATE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETINGS	100.0	50.00	50.00	50.00	24.89	3.28	15.01	25.31	3.75	15.49	

DESCRIPTION	Pradhan (Women)	GORAKHPUR									
		MEMBERS			GENERAL PUBLIC			TOTAL			
		MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	
PER PANCHAYAT AVERAGE POPULATION OF VOTERS	42	8	5	13	443	373	816	451	378	829	
AVERA ATTENDANCE IN THE MEETINGS	42	5	2	7	75	8	83	80	10	90	
RATE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETINGS	100.0	62.50	40.00	53.85	16.93	2.14	10.17	17.74	2.65	10.86	

reported significantly much higher than the participants among the general groups of population in the meetings.

Average numbers of participants per meeting of Panchayat was worked out to be 222 persons and the domination of men participants was well recognised in each of the meetings as organised for different purposes in both the districts. Since the participation of women was estimated to be only 3.21 per cent as against 21.64 per cent for men in the meetings of village Panchayats. In fact the domination of men participants was found as larger as over 93 per cent in the meetings which were organised for purposes such as the distribution of hand pumps and old age pension, agriculture related matters and for assessing the financial situation of the village Panchayats. Similarly, the participation of women was recognised at highest level at 11.84 per cent only in the meetings which organised for the identification of beneficiaries for various programmes and the initiation of Jawahar Rojgar Yojana and the Indira Avas yojana and lowest at 7 per cent in the meetings for assessing the financial situation of Panchayats and the distribution of Hand pumps and old age pension. The full attendance of PRI's members, both men and women, was never witnessed in any meeting while the proportion of them attending the Panchayat meetings were found significantly higher in Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur.

TABLE 5.3 : PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETINGS FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES

PER MEETING AVERAGE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

PURPOSE OF MEETING	SAHARANPUR								
	MEMBERS			OTHERS			TOTAL		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
JRY	4	2	6	120	14	134	124	16	140
							(88.57)	(11.43)	(100.0)
Construction of Panchayat Bhawan	5	2	7	129	13	142	134	15	149
							(89.93)	(10.07)	(100.0)
Implementation and Identification of Indira Avas Yojana	4	2	6	99	12	111	103	13	116
							(88.79)	(11.21)	(100.0)
IRDP	5	1	6	136	12	148	141	13	154
							(91.56)	(8.44)	(100.0)
School Matters	4	1	5	117	7	124	121	8	129
							(93.80)	(6.20)	(100.0)
Income expenditure	4	2	6	93	7	100	97	9	106
							(91.51)	(8.49)	(100.0)
Agriculture Purpose	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Providing Handpump and Pension, and Telephone facilities	4	1	5	106	6	112	110	7	117
							(94.02)	(5.98)	(100.0)
Average Participants	4	2	6	117	13	130	121	15	136
							(90.23)	(9.77)	(100.0)

Table 5.3 Contd....

PER MEETING AVERAGE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

PURPOSE OF MEETING	GORAKHPUR									GRAND TOTAL		
	MEMBERS			OTHERS			TOTAL					
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
JRY	5	2	7	72	9	81	77	11	88	201	27	228
Construction of Panchayat Bhawan	5	2	7	88	11	99	93	13	106	227	28	255
Implementation of Indira Avas Yojana	5	2	7	66	9	75	71	10	81	174	23	197
IRDP	5	2	7	89	10	99	94	12	106	235	25	260
School Matters	5	1	6	69	7	76	74	13	87	195	21	216
Income and expenditure of Panchayats	5	2	7	69	1	70	74	3	77	171	12	183
Agriculture Purpose	4	1	5	67	4	71	71	5	76	71	5	76
Providing Handpump Pension and Telephone Facilities	5	1	6	77	6	83	78	6	84	188	13	201
Average Participants	5	2	7	75	8	83	80	10	90	103	19	222
							(88.76)	(11.24)	(100.0)	(90.59)	(9.41)	(100.0)

In Saharanpur, the participation of women varied at highest proportion at 11.43 per cent in the meetings organised for the implementation of Jawahar Rojgar Yojana to lowest at 5.98 per cent in the meetings of distribution of Hand Pumps etc. However, in Gorakhpur, the highest participation of women was revealed in the meetings of school related matters (14.94 per cent) and lowest at 3.90 per cent in the meetings for assessing the financial situation of the village Panchayats. Thus excepting the case of Pradhans and at some extent of male members, the negligible participation of women in the meetings of different village Panchayats had been well recognised in both the districts. In fact, the women members in general and the women among the generation public in particular, were noted mainly participating in the meetings for the purpose of the identification of beneficiaries and the selection of locations in different villages, which were to be covered under the various employment oriented programmes such as Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, IRDP etc. while a very little level of participation was revealed in the meetings which were organised for matters related to assessing the financial situation of Panchayats, development of infrastructure and agricultural situations in different village Panchayats.

PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSION AND THE AFFAIRS OF MEETINGS

It revealed that the decisions regarding the fixation of schedule for meetings and the agenda matters to be discussed in the meetings were generally carried out by the Pradhans through consulting their male family members, Village Development Officer and the certain influential PRI members, who generally favour to Pradhan on

certain matters in most of the village Panchayats. However, over 39 per cent Pradhans in Saharanpur and 26 Pradhans in Gorakhpur had never consulted either the members of PRI's or the VDO for deciding the schedule of meetings in the past and took all the decisions in this regard about themselves. Also, a very large proportion of Pradhans (54.84 per cent), comprising 49.02 per cent in Saharanpur and 61.90 per cent in Gorakhpur were preparing the agenda matters through consulting their male family members without discussing and disclosing it among the participants of the meeting in advance. It seems that the decisions regarding which matters to be presented or not to be kept open for discussions in the meetings were mainly undertaken by the Pradhans and their family members without involving the members in the most of village Panchayats. Since the Pradhans of a large numbers of village Panchayats (83.87 per cent), 84.31 per cent in Saharanpur and 83.33 per cent in Gorakhpur had decided the matters of agenda Jointly with their family members followed by around 60 per cent Pradhans had consulted to the male members of Panchayats before presenting it for discussion in the meetings of village Panchayats. The participation of women members in deciding for the finalisation of agenda matters of the meetings was reported only in 19.35 per cent village Panchayats, consisting of 27.45 per cent in Saharanpur and only 9.52 per cent in Gorakhpur while the participation of local people in this regard was visualised only in 16.13 per cent village Panchayats. This indicates the fact that the Pradhans and their family members play an important role in performing the activities of Panchayats, including in deciding about the matters and issues to be discussed in the meetings. The marginalisation and neglecting approach against PRI's members, in general, and the women members in particular was largely practiced by

the Pradhans in making decisions for the fixation of schedule of the meetings and engaging them in different affairs of the Panchayats.

TABLE 5.4: PATTERN OF PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION IN PREPARATION OF AGENDA MATTERS WITH THE PRI MEMBERS BEFORE THE MEETINGS

(Number of Panchayats)

NATURE OF CONSULTATION OF AGENDA MATTERS

PARTICIPANTS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Family Members	43 (84.31)	8 (15.69)	51 (100.0)	35 (83.33)	7 (16.67)	42 (100.0)	78 (83.87)	15 (16.13)	93 (100.0)
Men PRIs Members	35 (68.63)	16 (31.37)	51 (100.0)	21 (50.00)	21 (50.00)	42 (100.0)	56 (60.22)	37 (39.78)	93 (100.0)
Women PRI Members	14 (27.45)	37 (72.25)	51 (100.0)	4 (9.52)	38 (90.48)	42 (100.0)	18 (19.35)	75 (80.65)	93 (100.0)
Other (VDO) and General Public	13 (25.49)	38 (74.51)	51 (100.0)	2 (4.76)	40 (95.24)	42 (100.0)	15 (16.13)	78 (83.87)	93 (100.0)
Average Total	26 (50.98)	25 (49.02)	51 (100.0)	16 (38.10)	26 (61.90)	42 (100.0)	42 (45.16)	51 (54.84)	93 (100.0)

It revealed that only 16.13 per cent Pradhans, consisting 16.67 per cent in Gorakhpur and 15.69 per cent in Saharanpur, were neither consulting nor involving their family members in the activities and functioning of village Panchayats. Instead they were found regularly consulting both men and women members about the

matters to be presented in the meetings and the measures to be adopted in properly functioning of Panchayats and finding solutions in the cases of problems created by the participants on certain matters of discussions in the meetings.

CO-ORDINATION AMONG PRADHANS AND MEMBERS IN THE PANCHAYAT ACTIVITIES

As indicated earlier that a majority of both men as well as women members particularly those representing to opposition groups of Pradhans, show little interest in associating themselves in the activities of village Panchayats. In fact, they were found hardly participate in the meetings and programmes initiated by the Block Panchayats and the village Panchayats. Since only 26.88 per cent men members and 18.28 per cent women members were witnessed participating in different activities of Panchayats. The participation of women members was found highest in matters related to deciding for the initiation of various development programmes (23.66 per cent) followed by 20.43 per cent in the implementation of schemes and programmes while lowest level of participation was revealed in the distribution and allocation of funds under the implementation of certain welfare and development schemes which were proposed to be initiated in different village Panchayats (16.13 per cent). However, the participation of men members was recorded at highest level (31.18 per cent) in assisting women Pradhans in getting allotment of various development programmes from the Block Panchayats followed by solving the problems of Pradhans in matters related to the implementation of different development schemes while lowest level of participation was registered in the distribution of funds under the various schemes and projects (19.03 per cent).

Across the district level, the participation of women in different activities of the village Panchayats was revealed significantly at larger level in district Gorakhpur (21.43 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (15.69 per cent) while the concerned situation was reversal in the participation of men members among these districts. Also, the differences in the participation rate of men and women members in the various activities of village Panchayats was found significantly larger in Saharanpur (11.76 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (4.76 per cent), indicating the fact that the women Pradhans in district Gorakhpur were undertaking better initiatives and increasing emphasis in maximising the participation of women members in certain matters and issues related to various activities of village Panchayats than in Saharanpur. The participation of women members was visualised at higher extent in the matters associated with deciding for initiating certain development programmes at village Panchayat level in both the districts, 26.19 per cent in Gorakhpur and 21.57 per cent in Saharanpur, while the lowest level of participation was noticed in the matters related to the allotment of funds under different programmes in Gorakhpur (19.05 per cent) and in solving problems in the implementation of development programmes in Saharanpur (11.76 per cent). The men members were found participating at larger level in assisting women Pradhans in performing different activities such as allotment and sanctioning of different development projects in their favour at the Block Panchayat level in Gorakhpur (33.33 per cent) and in helping women Pradhans in solving certain problems which they face in the implementation of certain development programmes and welfare schemes in district Saharanpur (31.38 per cent).

PARTICIPATION AND DOMINATION IN THE MEETINGS

Since it has been well recognised in the preceding analysis that the male family members of women Pradhans were highly involved in performing the duties and utilising the powers of Pradhans in most of the village Panchayats. Also the male members were found well assisting to the women Pradhans in solving several problems which were faced in properly functioning of Panchayat's activities and in performing several official activities at the Block Panchayat level. It further pointed out that the male family members of women Pradhans were highly dominating in the general discussions and the issues rated to taking policy decisions on certain matters in the meetings of village Panchayats. Since, a highest proportion of around 29 per cent Pradhans and 34 per cent members of different village Panchayats had expressed the views that the decision on certain matters are generally undertaken by the husbands or the fathers of women Pradhans, while the domination of women Pradhans in the meetings was reported only in the meetings of 9.68 per cent village Panchayats of Gorakhpur. However, the domination of family members of women Pradhans in the various issues and matters of discussions was reported significantly in a larger numbers of village Panchayats of Saharanpur (47.06 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (7.14 per cent). The domination of men PRI's members in the meetings was also reported quite significant in a sizeable numbers of village Panchayats of both Saharanpur (27.45 per cent) as well as Gorakhpur (30.95 per cent). The women representatives, particularly women Pradhans were found playing a significant role in performing various activities of Panchayats and were dominating in several issues of discussions and making policy decisions in around

21 per cent village Panchayats of Gorakhpur while in Saharanpur the domination of both Pradhans and members was almost lacking in this regard.

TABLE 5.6 : PERSONS DOMINATING IN THE MEETING OF VILLAGE PANCHAYATS

DOMINATING PERSONS	SAHARANPUR	GORAKHPUR	TOTAL
Pradhans (Self)	--	9 (21.43)	9 (9.68)
Men Members	14 (27.45)	13 (30.95)	27 (29.03)
Women Members	--	1 (2.38)	1 (1.08)
Representations Old Gram Sabha	4 (7.84)	6 (14.29)	10 (10.75)
General Public	7 (13.73)	9 (21.43)	16 (17.20)
Village Development Officers	2 (3.92)	1 (2.38)	3 (3.23)
Family Members of Pradhan	24 (47.06)	3 (7.14)	27 (29.03)
TOTAL	51 (100.00)	42 (100.00)	93 (100.00)

CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS

In view of examining about the type of general environment prevailing in the functioning of the meetings of village Panchayats we further attempted to examine that at what extent the members of PRI's, general public and the Pradhans had been co-operating and maintaining relations each others on certain matters and activities of village Panchayats in the past. It was reported by the women Pradhans that women members hardly raise any unnecessary objections, instead they mostly

maintain very kind co-operation in the successful functioning of meetings as well as different activities of Panchayats. This may be due to the fact that women member were seen hardly participating in the discussions and issues related to decision making process in the meetings which were organised in the past. In fact, a majority of them were generally sitting silent in almost the meetings. The men population, both among the representatives of PRI's and general public were indicated mainly participating in several issues of discussions, raising certain objections on certain matters and activities of Panchayats and enquiring about certain aspects from the Pradhans. In fact, the men participants among the opposition groups of Pradhans were found usually play a critical role by raising unnecessary and objectionable questions, and were showing irrational behaviour and criticising on certain important issues of policy decisions. On the whole, the behaviour and co-operation of a larger proportion of PRI's representatives was seen quite cordial in the meetings of village Panchayats both in Gorakhpur (63.41 per cent) and Saharanpur (62.04 per cent) during last year. In both the districts, a larger proportion of male members of PRI's were seen co-operating in discussing about matters related to the distribution of hand pumps and the old age pensions to the eligible beneficiaries and initiating for development of various social infrastructural facilities in different villages. The non-co-operation of general public was noted significantly at highest level in the meetings organised for the purpose of examining the financial situation of different village Panchayats in both Gorakhpur (52.73 per cent) and Saharanpur (66.87 per cent) while in latter districts a largest proportions of them (57.81 per cent) were well co-operating with the Pradhans in the matters related to the identification of

TABLE 5.7 : NATURE OF CO-OPERATION AND CO-ORDINATION AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS

(Percentage Distributions)

PURPOSE OF MEETING	GENERAL PUBLIC				PRI's MEN MEMBERS			
	SAHARANPUR		GORAKHPUR		SAHARANPUR		GORAKHPOUR	
	Cordial	Non-Cordial	Cordial	Non-Cordial	Cordial	Non-Cordial	Cordial	Non-Cordial
JRY	47.76	52.24	62.14	37.86	63.78	36.22	60.83	39.17
Panchayat Bhavan	50.42	49.58	70.00	30.00	55.83	44.17	65.00	35.00
Indira Awas	42.05	47.95	58.75	41.25	58.64	41.36	62.50	37.50
IRDP	50.16	49.84	60.37	39.63	65.16	34.84	66.67	33.33
School Matter	54.67	45.33	55.00	45.00	61.00	39.00	61.43	38.57
Income Expenditure	33.13	66.87	47.27	52.73	46.87	53.13	51.36	48.64
Agriculture	-	-	75.00	25.00	-	-	65.00	35.00
Handpump/Toilet/Pension/Telephone	57.81	42.19	67.56	32.44	65.31	34.69	67.68	32.32
Average Total	49.47	50.53	61.94	38.06	62.04	37.96	63.41	36.59

beneficiaries to be covered under different schemes and the distribution of hand pumps and old age Pension and initiating for developing infrastructural facilities followed by the discussions related to school matters (54.67 per cent) while in Gorakhpur the co-operation of a highest proportion of representatives among general population was experienced in assessing the situation of crop production in both the crop seasonal meetings (75 per cent) followed by in deciding for the construction of Panchayat Bhavan (70 per cent) in different village Panchayats. (Table 7).

PROBLEMS IN THE FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYATS

A detailed enquiry was carried out from the Pradhans and the members of PRI's whether they have been experiencing any problems from different groups of people in the properly functioning of the Panchayat activities and its meetings. Discussing with respondents we found that a well proportion of male participants among the members of PRI's, general public and the representatives of old Gram Sabha unnecessarily interfere over the matters of discussions and making decisions on certain issues with their sole intention of and willing to dominate in the proceedings of the meetings and to play a role like of the opposition group in the Panchayats.

However, by and large the meetings of significantly a large numbers of village Panchayats were held without facing any serious problems during last year, as indicated by 69.06 per cent Pradhans and 67.74 per cent members of different PRI's. However, the proportions of village Panchayats reported to had faced certain problems in successfully functioning of the meetings and activities of Panchayats were noticed significantly at larger level in Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur. In Gorakhpur, the male participants among the general public were observed as the main creators of problems in the meetings by the 45.24 per cent Pradhans and 63.34 per cent members while a second majority responses of the members (48.13 per cent) were against the type of nature and co-operation of the representatives of last Gram Sabhas were showing in the functioning of Panchayats in the past. Similarly, the male participants among the general public were revealed creating problems on several counts in the meetings of a large proportions of village Panchayats (43.14 per cent) while the role played by the male members

TABLE 5.8 (a) : PROBLEM EXISTING IN THE FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYATS

(Members)
(Number of responses of Members)

INDIVIDUAL CAUSING PROBLEMS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Male Members	49 (22.58)	168 (77.42)	217 (100.0)	44 (23.53)	143 (76.47)	187 (100.0)	93 (23.02)	311 (76.98)	404 (100.0)
Female Members	20 (9.22)	197 (90.78)	217 (100.0)	25 (13.37)	162 (86.63)	187 (100.0)	45 (11.14)	359 (88.86)	404 (100.0)
Male Among General Public	74 (34.10)	143 (65.90)	217 (100.0)	119 (63.64)	68 (36.36)	187 (100.0)	193 (47.77)	211 (52.23)	404 (100.0)
Old Gram Sabha Members	78 (35.94)	139 (64.06)	217 (100.0)	90 (48.13)	97 (51.87)	187 (100.0)	168 (41.58)	236 (58.42)	404 (100.0)
Total (Average)	55 (25.35)	162 (74.65)	217 (100.0)	70 (37.43)	117 (62.57)	187 (100.0)	125 (30.94)	279 (69.06)	404 (100.0)

TABLE 5.8 (b) : PROBLEM EXISTING IN THE FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYATS

(Pradhan)
(Number of responses of Pradhans)

INDIVIDUALS CAUSING PROBLEMS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Male Members	10 (19.61)	41 (80.39)	51 (100.0)	13 (30.95)	29 (69.05)	42 (100.0)	23 (24.73)	70 (75.27)	93 (100.0)
Female Members	16 (31.37)	35 (68.63)	51 (100.0)	15 (35.71)	27 (64.29)	42 (100.0)	31 (33.33)	62 (66.67)	93 (100.0)
General Public	22 (43.14)	29 (56.86)	51 (100.0)	19 (45.24)	23 (54.76)	42 (100.0)	41 (44.09)	52 (55.91)	93 (100.0)
Old Gram Sabha Members	14 (27.45)	37 (72.55)	51 (100.0)	7 (16.67)	35 (83.33)	42 (100.0)	21 (22.58)	72 (77.42)	93 (100.0)
Total (Average)	16 (31.37)	35 (68.63)	51 (100.0)	14 (33.33)	28 (66.67)	42 (100.0)	30 (32.26)	63 (67.74)	93 (100.0)

belonging to different PRI's, in this regard, was seen only at smaller extent in Saharanpur. However, as per information gathered among the women Pradhans it was well witnessed that the women members, those mainly represent to the opposition groups of Pradhans, generally play a dirty and extremely dangerous and objectionable role than the male members in the functioning and activities of village Panchayats in both the sample districts.

SCOPE OF EXISTING PROBLEMS

It was further pointed out that the presentation of matters related to the identification of beneficiaries and locations for covering under the various development before the participants of the meetings and deciding for the implementation of different employment oriented programmes, have been experienced as the main subjects for developing disputes among the participants and generating problems in the meetings. Since significantly a highest proportions of Pradhans had faced variety of problems in the meetings which were organised for the purpose of the identification of beneficiaries to be covered under the JRY (41.38 per cent), followed by deciding for the construction of school buildings, development of different infrastructural facilities, beneficiaries to be covered under the old age pension scheme etc. (25.86 per cent) while lowest in the matters of discussions on the implementation of Indira Avas Yojana (15.52 per cent). The proportions of Pradhans reported to have been facing certain problems in the meetings organised for the purpose of JRY were significantly higher in Saharanpur (43.55 per cent, as compared to Gorakhpur (38.89 per cent). The men members of different PRI's in Saharanpur and the participants

from general public in Gorakhpur were reported as the main problem creators in the meetings which were organised for the implementation of JRY in the past. However, a lowest proportions of village Panchayats were found facing problems in the meetings organised for assessing their financial situation, both in Saharanpur (3.23 per cent) and Gorakhpur (3.71 per cent) (Table.5.9).

TABLE 5.9 : SCOPE OF PROBLEMS IN THE FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYATS (PRADHANS)

MATTERS	NUMBERS OF RESPONSES														
	SAHARANPUR					GORAKHPUR					TOTAL				
	Male Members	Female Members	General Public	Old Gram Sabha Members	Total	Male Members	Female Members	General Public	Old Gram Sabha Members	Total	Male Members	Female Members	General Public	Old Gram Sabha Members	Total
JRY	6 (60.00)	7 (43.75)	10 (45.45)	4 (28.5)	27 (43.55)	4 (30.77)	6 (40.00)	9 (47.37)	2 (28.57)	21 (38.89)	10 (43.48)	13 (41.84)	19 (46.34)	6 (28.59)	48 (41.38)
Indira Awas Yojana	1 (10.00)	2 (12.50)	4 (18.18)	3 (21.43)	10 (18.13)	1 (7.69)	2 (13.33)	4 (21.05)	1 (14.29)	8 (14.81)	2 (8.70)	4 (12.90)	8 (19.51)	4 (19.05)	18 (15.52)
I R D P	1 (10.00)	2 (12.50)	3 (13.64)	2 (14.29)	8 (12.90)	2 (15.38)	1 (6.67)	2 (10.53)	3 (42.86)	8 (14.81)	3 (13.84)	3 (9.68)	5 (12.20)	5 (23.81)	16 (13.70)
Income and Expenditure	- (6.28)	1 (7.14)	- (3.23)	1 (7.69)	2 (3.23)	1 (5.26)	- (5.26)	1 (3.71)	- (3.71)	2 (4.35)	1 (4.35)	1 (3.23)	1 (2.44)	1 (4.70)	4 (3.46)
Others*	2 (20.00)	4 (25.00)	5 (22.73)	4 (28.57)	15 (24.19)	5 (38.47)	6 (40.00)	3 (16.78)	1 (14.28)	7 (27.76)	7 (38.43)	10 (32.26)	8 (19.61)	5 (23.81)	30 (26.88)
TOTAL	10 (100.0)	16 (100.0)	22 (100.0)	14 (100.0)	62 (100.0)	13 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	19 (100.0)	7 (100.0)	54 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	31 (100.0)	41 (100.0)	21 (100.0)	116 (100.0)

* Distribution of hand pumps, construction of schools and toilets and self employment programmes.

NATURE OF PROBLEMS

It further revealed that the kinds of problems, which were existing in the meetings and functioning of village Panchayats were very short-term phenomena. Since the Pradhans of over 55 per cent village Panchayats, consisting 53.70 per cent in Gorakhpur and 56.45 per cent in Saharanpur reported that they faced several kinds of problems in different issues of discussions on policy related matters from different segment of participants generally for shorter duration in various meetings which were held during last years in their village Panchayats. Only the participants among the representatives of Old Gram Sabhas were found largely creating various problems regularly. However, in Gorakhpur significantly highest proportions of Pradhans had reported that they face regular problems in the functioning of Panchayat activities from the male representatives from general public (57.89 per cent) followed by male members of PRI's and at lowest level from the representatives of old Gram Sabhas (28.59 per cent). But in Saharanpur, the representatives of Old Gram Sabhas were the main participants in creating certain problems regularly in the functioning of a highest numbers of village Panchayats (57.14 per cent) followed by male participants among general public (40.91 per cent) and at lowest level among the women representatives of Village Panchayats (37.50 per cent).

REASONS OF EXISTING PROBLEMS

Enquiring among the different groups of local people and the officials of Block Panchayats it was indicated that the deeply developed divisions of population according to castes, religions and the groups of people formed according to different

TABLE 5.10 : NATURE OF PROBLEMS IN THE FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYAT

NATURE OF PROBLEMS	INDIVIDUAL CAUSING PROBLEMS														
	SAHARANPUR					GORAKHPUR					TOTAL				
	Male Members	Female Members	General Public	Old Gram Sabha Members	Total	Male Members	Female Members	General Public	Old Gram Sabha Members	Total	Male Members	Female Members	General Public	Old Gram Sabha Members	Total
Occasionally	6 (60.00)	10 (62.50)	13 (59.09)	6 (42.86)	35 (56.45)	7 (63.85)	9 (60.00)	8 (42.11)	5 (71.42)	29 (59.70)	13 (56.52)	19 (61.29)	21 (61.22)	11 (62.38)	64 (66.17)
Regularly	4 (40.00)	6 (37.50)	9 (40.91)	8 (57.14)	27 (43.55)	6 (46.14)	6 (40.00)	11 (57.89)	2 (28.57)	25 (46.30)	10 (43.48)	12 (38.71)	20 (48.78)	10 (47.62)	52 (44.83)
TOTAL	10 (100.0)	16 (100.0)	22 (100.0)	14 (100.0)	72 (100.0)	13 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	19 (100.0)	7 (100.0)	54 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	31 (100.0)	41 (100.0)	21 (100.0)	116 (100.0)

political parties during the period of elections in different village Panchayats had been the main causes behind increasing disturbances and problems on various ways in the functioning of a majority of village Panchayats. The people associated with different groups were found raise unnecessary questions only with the expectation to show their own domination and empowering over different groups of participants on certain issues. The groups of people which constituted according to their affiliation with different political parties were observed as the main mechanism for developing and enforcing to the creation of certain problems in a majority of the village Panchayats (43.97 per cent), comprising 46.77 per cent village Panchayats of Saharanpur and 40.74 per cent village Panchayats of Gorakhpur. The proportion of participants creating problems for the purpose of their own political interests were found at highest level from the general participants (90.32 per cent) in both the districts, 68.18 per cent in Saharanpur and 68.42 per cent in Gorakhpur. However, the groups of people formed on the basis of castes were seen creating problems in the functioning of lowest proportions of village Panchayats (17.24 per cent).

Beside this, an excessive involvement and increasing interference of male family members of women Pradhans over the functioning of various activities of village Panchayats and providing little importance to consider the co-operation and maximise the participation of opposition groups of PRI's members and the socially well honoured people of concerned villages in different activities of Panchayats and the initiation of certain development programmes and welfare activities were also observed some of the important factors which were directly motivating the people towards the generation of problems in the proper functioning of Panchayats and its activities.

It seems that the problems of groupism and the kinds of disturbances which were developing in the functioning of village Panchayats cannot be easily minimised unless the role and involvement of male family members in the functioning and certain affairs of decision making process is not minimised. In view of achieving the maximum role of women Pradhans and women members and mitigating the increasing problems which persisting in the proper functioning of the activities of village Panchayats and in making policy decisions on certain matters, an appropriate policy could be devised for minimising the participation of the family members of PRI's representatives and the general public. In the meetings and activities related to making discussions on certain crucial issues, such as initiation and measures to be undertaken for the identification of beneficiaries, assessment of income-expenditure and financial matters of Panchayats, making policy decisions on certain matters,

TABLE 5.11 : REASONS OF PROBLEMS FACED IN THE FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYATS

REASONS	INDIVIDUAL CAUSING PROBLEMS														
	SAHARANPUR					GORAKHPUR					TOTAL				
	Male Mem- bers	Fe- male Mem- bers	Gene- ral Pub- lic	Old Gram Sabha Mem- bers	Total	Male Mem- bers	Fe- male Mem- bers	Gene- ral Pub- lic	Old Gram Sabha Mem- bers	Total	Male Mem- bers	Fe- male Mem- bers	Gene- ral Pub- lic	Old Gram Sabha Mem- bers	Total
Community Groupism	1 (10.00)	2 (12.50)	2 (9.09)	3 (21.43)	9 (12.90)	6 (46.15)	5 (33.33)	2 (10.53)	3 (42.86)	16 (29.63)	7 (30.43)	7 (28.58)	4 (12.90)	6 (28.57)	24 (28.69)
Political Groupism	5 (50.00)	5 (31.25)	15 (68.18)	4 (28.57)	29 (48.77)	2 (15.38)	4 (26.67)	13 (68.42)	3 (42.86)	22 (40.74)	7 (30.43)	9 (29.03)	28 (98.32)	7 (33.33)	51 (43.97)
Castism	2 (20.00)	6 (37.50)	3 (13.64)	5 (36.71)	16 (25.81)	- (8.67)	1 (15.70)	3 (7.41)	- (1.70)	4 (22.58)	2 (10.36)	7 (23.81)	6 (17.24)	5 (17.24)	20
Showing Domination	2 (20.00)	3 (18.75)	2 (9.09)	2 (14.29)	9 (14.52)	5 (38.46)	5 (33.33)	1 (5.26)	1 (21.44)	12 (22.22)	7 (30.43)	8 (25.81)	3 (9.08)	3 (4.27)	21 (18.18)
TOTAL	10 (100.0)	16 (100.0)	22 (100.0)	14 (100.0)	62 (100.0)	13 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	19 (100.0)	7 (100.0)	54 (100.0)	23 (100.0)	31 (100.0)	21 (100.0)	116 (100.0)	

type of programmes and welfare activities to be initiated in the future, distribution of responsibilities and duties to different PRI's representatives etc. the participation of only the elected representatives of village Panchayats, village extension workers, the Village Development Officers and concerned officials of Block Panchayats should be assured and the complete restrictions should be made against the participation of general public, including the family members of the Pradhans and members. Initiating this kind of mechanism and procedure in practice will certainly provide an opportunity to the women representatives of village Panchayats to maximise their participation in certain issues of discussion, taking decisions for certain matters, developing self confidence and independency culture and finally in improving their social standings and empowerment.

CHAPTER VI

PARTICIPATION IN INITIATING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

THE distribution of different development programmes and welfare activities among the village Panchayats is mainly undertaken by the Block Panchayats in its different BDC meetings. At the Block Panchayat level, a committee comprising of B.D.C. members and the Pramukh of Block Panchayhat is constituted for the purpose of allocation of different state and centrally sponsored projects and development schemes and to review the progress of allocated programmes to the different village Panchayats. Several State Government Departments, District Development Office and Tehsil Office are also seen allocating various kinds of development schemes and projects to the village Panchayats.

INITIATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The main development programmes which were initiated during last year and were currently being implemented in different village Panchayats were the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, IRDP, Indira Avas Yojana and the construction of Primary Schools, Panchayat Bhavan and toilets. The Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, a centrally sponsored scheme was implemented in each of the village Panchayats of both the districts. The Indira Avas Yojana and the Integrated Rural Development Programmes were found another two major schemes, which were, introduced in 56.99 per cent and

68.82 per cent village Panchayats respectively. However, the proportions of village Panchayats which were involved in the implementation of Indira Avas Yojana were noticed significantly at larger extent in Saharanpur (88.24 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (19.05 per cent) but the proportion of village Panchayats which were covered under the IRDP were indicated to be relatively higher in former district (71.83 per cent) than the latter one (66.67 per cent). In all, every village Panchayat in both the districts were involved in the implementation of atleast one development programme while around 70 per cent of the village Panchayats were implementing more than one programmes. Over and above it revealed that the village Panchayats of both the districts were providing increasing thrust in favour of undertaking and implementation of employment oriented development programmes, poverty eradication schemes and rural housings for the people those were living below the poverty line and for those belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribe households. Little emphasis had been provided for initiating such development programmes, which directly or indirectly improve the social condition and the quality of human resources.

The financial situation of the village Panchayats was also seen very disappointing in both the districts. Since the average amount of finances received by the village Panchayats from different sources for the purpose of the implementation of various development programmes during last year was estimated to be only Rs.59.94, though the financial situation of the village Panchayat in Gorakhpur was appeared relatively better than the Saharanpur. The finances received for the implementation of JRY, IRDP and Indira Avas Yojana have the major contribution of 93.71 per cent in the total income of village Panchayats. In Saharanpur, significantly higher amount

of finances were received for the purpose of Indira Avas Yojana (40.78 per cent) followed by J.R.Y. (28.32 per cent) and IRDP (24.02 per cent). However in Gorakhpur, it was highest for JRY (60.11 per cent) followed by IRDP (27.36 per cent) and a lowest of only 6.80 per cent for Indira Avas Yojana. The allotment of funds to different village Panchayats for the initiation of different development programmes was mainly carried out by the Block Panchayats under the various centrally sponsored projects. However most of the Pradhans of both the districts were found not visiting any of the offices of different Government Departments and funding agencies for getting the allotment of different development schemes in favour of their village Panchayats. Since around 81.72 per cent women, consisting 82.35 per cent in Saharanpur and 80.95 per cent in Gorakhpur had never attempted to visits the offices of either any Government departments or the offices of districts for asking the allotment of any schemes while only 5.38 per cent and 3.23 per cent Pradhans had made some efforts for granting development schemes from the Block Panchayats and the District Development office respectively. Though, the family members of the Pradhans were again found playing an instrumental role for visiting different departments of Government in this regard.

Over and above it seems that the village Panchayats are making little efforts for getting finances and the allotment of different development programmes and welfare schemes from different State Government Department while they are depending mainly upon the Block Panchayats in this regard. The allocation of funds for the implementation of Jawahar Rojgar to different village Panchayats is already fixed and the financial requirement for carrying out this scheme is released by the Block Panchayat without initiating any efforts by the Pradhans of village Panchayats.

However, in the cases of other development programmes which are allotted through the Block Panchayats to the village Panchayats, are assigned after fulfilling at least some official formalities and some efforts from the part of Pradhans. Since we found that around half of the Pradhans comprising 75 per cent in Gorakhpur and 44.44 per cent in Saharanpur had made at least some efforts for the allotment of Indira Avas Yojana in favour of their village Panchayats while only 7.81 per cent Pradhans had received the opportunity for getting the allotment of the IRDP to them without making any major efforts. The schemes such as the construction of Panchayats, primary school buildings and the bio-gas plants were also found allocated to 10.75 per cent of the village Panchayats from the Block Panchayats after making several efforts.

The women representatives of village Panchayats were found visiting mainly the offices of Block Panchayats and the offices of Districts to get different development schemes, though the proportion of such women was reported considerably higher in Gorakhpur (11.90 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (5.86 per cent). The reasons such as lacking information and awareness about the procedure and methodology to be adopted for applying about the different categories of development programmes with different funding agencies and the Government Departments and lacking mobility of women Pradhans outside their villages were found mainly enforcing and restricting the participation of women representatives of a majority of the village Panchayats in approaching for and initiating efforts for favour of getting different development schemes and welfare activities from different funding Governments Departments and agencies.

In fact, all the women Pradhans which were either visiting to the offices of Block Panchayats (35.46 per cent) or the various other Government offices (17.20 per cent) along with their family members and the relatives in this regard were found facing various kinds of problems initially, in the allotment of schemes and latter in

TABLE 6.1: IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND THE FINANCES RECEIVED FOR DIFFERENT PURPOSES

PROGRAMMES												
	SAHARANPUR				GORAKHPUR				TOTAL			
	Yes	No	Total	Average Amount Received	Yes	No	Total	Average Amount Received	Yes	No	Total	Average Amount Received
JRY	51	-	51	36488	42	-	42	98058	93	-	93	84700
	(100.0)		(100.0)		(100.0)		(100.0)		(100.0)		(100.0)	
IRDP	34	17	51	46429	30	12	42	63049	64	29	93	54220
	(66.67)	(33.33)	(100.0)		(71.83)	(28.57)	(100.)		(68.82)	(31.18)	(100.0)	
Housing (Indira Awas Yojana)	45	6	51	59558	8	34	42	58750	53	40	93	59434
	(88.24)	(11.76)	(100.0)		(19.05)	(88.95)	(100.0)		(56.99)	(43.01)	(100.0)	
Panchayat Bhavan	1	50	51	72000	2	40	42	120000	3	90	93	104000
	(1.96)	(98.04)	(100.0)		(4.76)	(95.24)	(100.0)		(3.23)	(96.77)	(100.0)	
Primary School Building	1	50	51	155000	2	40	42	72500	3	90	93	100000
	(1.96)	(98.04)	(100.0)		(4.76)	(95.24)	(100.0)		(3.23)	(96.77)	(100.0)	
Toilet	5	46	51	45000	-	-	-	-	5	88	93	45000
	(9.80)	(90.20)	(100.0)						(5.38)	(94.62)	(100.0)	
Bio-gas Plants	-	-	-	-	4	38	42	2775	4	89	93	2775
				47967				78566				59935

TABLE 6.2 : PARTICIPATION IN MAKING EFFORTS FOR GETTING DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

DEPARTMENT	SAHARANPUR					GORAKHPUR					TOTAL				
	None	Self	Family Members	Others	Total	None	Self	Family Members	Others	Total	None	Self	Family Members	Others	Total
BLOCK	32 (62.75)	2 (3.92)	14 (27.45)	3 (5.88)	51 (100.0)	28 (66.67)	3 (7.14)	9 (21.43)	2 (4.76)	42 (100.0)	60 (64.52)	5 (5.38)	23 (24.73)	5 (3.37)	93 (100.0)
DISTRICT	46 (90.20)	1 (1.36)	3 (5.88)	1 (1.36)	51 (100.0)	34 (80.96)	2 (4.76)	4 (9.52)	2 (4.76)	42 (100.0)	80 (86.02)	3 (3.23)	7 (7.52)	3 (3.23)	93 (100.0)
OTHERS	49 (96.08)	- (1.36)	1 (1.36)	1 (1.36)	51 (100.0)	40 (95.24)	- (4.76)	2 (4.76)	- (4.76)	42 (100.0)	89 (85.70)	- (3.23)	3 (1.07)	1 (1.07)	93 (100.0)
AVERAGE	42 (82.35)	1 (1.96)	6 (11.76)	2 (3.92)	51 (100.0)	34 (80.95)	2 (4.76)	5 (11.90)	1 (2.38)	42 (100.0)	76 (81.72)	3 (3.23)	11 (11.83)	3 (3.23)	93 (100.0)

the release of funds for favour of allotted schemes, for the implementation in their village Panchayats. Besides this, a large proportion of the Pradhans were found not getting proper and timely information from the different departments of Government (27.12 per cent) about the kinds of development programmes they had proposed for distribution among different village Panchayats. Significantly a larger proportions of Pradhans (36.37 per cent), consisting 42.10 per cent in Saharanpur and 28.57 per cent in Gorakhpur had also reported that they generally do not receive any information from the Block Panchayats in time about the arrival of new development schemes and which village Panchayats had been identified for the allocation of concerned schemes and programmes. In Gorakhpur, significantly a highest proportions of Pradhans (34.78 per cent) had reported that the offices of Block Panchayats and District level unnecessarily take longer time in the allotment of different development schemes to them while a lowest proportion of Pradhans (17.39 per cent) had complained that they generally do receive inadequate funding than the actual cost involved in the implementation of different development schemes and activities.

TABLE 6.3 : KINDS OF PROBLEMS FACED BY THE RESPONDENTS WITH DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT OFFICES IN THE ALLOTMENT OF SCHEMES AND FUNDS

DEPARTMENTS	KIND OF PROBLEMS														
	SAHARANPUR					GORAKHPUR					TOTAL				
	Delay in allo- tting sche- mes	Delay in relea- sing funds	Lack- ing infor- mati- on of New Sche- mes	Inade- quate Fu- nding	Total	Delay in allo- tting sche- mes	Delay in relea- sing funds	Lack- ing infor- mati- on of New Sche- mes	Inade- quate Fu- nding	Total	Delay in allo- tting sche- mes	Delay in relea- sing funds	Lack- ing infor- mati- on of New Sche- mes	Inade- quate Fu- nding	Total
BLOCK	4 (21.05)	5 (26.32)	8 (42.10)	2 (10.53)	19 (100.0)	6 (42.85)	2 (14.29)	4 (28.57)	2 (14.29)	14 (100.0)	10 (3+0.36)	7 (21.21)	12 (36.37)	4 (12.12)	33 (100.0)
DISTRICT	2 (48.00)	- (25.00)	2 (20.00)	1 (100.0)	5 (25.00)	2 (37.50)	3 (12.50)	1 (25.00)	2 (100.0)	8 (30.76)	4 (23.00)	3 (23.00)	3 (23.00)	3 (100.0)	
OTHERS	1 (50.00)	- (50.00)	1 (100.0)	2 (100.0)	- (100.0)	- (100.0)	1 (100.0)	- (100.0)	1 (100.0)	- (33.33)	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	3 (100.0)	
TOTAL	6 (23.8)	6 (23.8)	10 (38.46)	4 (15.38)	26 (100.0)	8 (34.76)	5 (21.74)	6 (26.09)	4 (17.39)	23 (100.0)	14 (23.73)	11 (18.64)	16 (27.12)	8 (13.56)	59 (100.0)

NATURE OF PARTICIPATION

Information regarding the nature and extent of participation of both local people and the women representatives of PRI's in the initiation, implementation and supervision of development activities which were undertaken in different village Panchayats was collected from the women Pradhans and the members of Panchayats. It was reported by a majority of women members that the women Pradhans had never invited them to participate at any stages of the initiation, supervision and implementation of any welfare scheme and the development programmes in the past and in making decisions for the kinds of development programmes to be initiated for implementation in the concerned village Panchayats in the future. Only few women members of the supporting groups of Pradhans had reported that they occasionally

accompany to the Pradhans in implementing and supervising various development activities. It was believed that almost the women members were completely lacking knowledge about their basic rights, functions and duties to be performed in the functioning and activities of Panchayats and in the implementation of various development programmes and welfare activities. The general understanding among women members was that the matters related to the initiation and making decisions for undertaking various development schemes at the village Panchayats level is a sole function of Pradhans only while the functions of members are only to participate in certain limited numbers of activities and meetings of village Panchayats. As a result, they were formally not participating in any matters of initiation and the supervision of development programmes in both the districts. It is, therefore, the present analysis has attempted to examine the nature and extent of participation of only women Pradhans in different stages of implementation of various development programmes. The analysis revealed that a larger segment of women Pradhans (63.44 per cent), both in Gorakhpur (57.14 per cent) and Saharanpur (68.63 per cent) had never participated in matters related to the initiations, implementation and supervision of different development activities which were undertaken in their respective village Panchayats. In fact, the lacking participation of women Pradhans was revealed as larger as 68.82 per cent in each of the activities such as the preparation of schemes and proposals for initiation of different development programmes and the identification of beneficiaries to be covered under various development programmes while relatively highest level of participation was visualised in the initiation and selection of different activities for implementation in different locations of the concerned village Panchayats (49 per cent). However,

TABLE 6.4.: PARTICIAPTION OF PRADHANS IN THE SUPERVISION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

EDUCATI- ONAL LEVEL	SAHARANPUR				GORAKHPUR				TOTAL			
	Self	Family Members	Others	Total	Self	Family Members	Others	Total	Self	Family Members	Others	Total
Illiterate	6 (26.09)	15 (65.22)	2 (8.69)	23 (100.0)	1 (28.00)	3 (68.00)	1 (28.00)	5 (100.0)	7 (25.00)	18 (64.29)	3 (10.71)	28 (100.0)
Literate	3 (21.43)	9 (64.29)	2 (14.28)	14 (100.0)	4 (28.00)	14 (70.00)	2 (10.00)	20 (100.0)	7 (28.59)	23 (67.65)	4 (11.76)	34 (100.0)
Primary	4 (57.14)	3 (42.86)	- (100.0)	7 (66.67)	6 (33.33)	3 (100.0)	- (62.50)	9 (37.50)	10 (62.50)	6 (39.33)	- (16.67)	16 (100.0)
Middle	3 (60.00)	2 (40.00)	- (100.0)	5 (75.00)	3 (25.00)	1 (100.0)	- (66.67)	4 (33.33)	6 (66.67)	3 (39.33)	- (16.67)	0 (100.0)
Secondary	2 (100.0)	- (75.00)	- (25.00)	2 (100.0)	3 (83.33)	1 (16.67)	- (100.0)	4 (83.33)	5 (16.67)	1 (16.67)	- (100.0)	6 (100.0)
Total	18 (35.24)	29 (56.86)	4 (7.85)	51 (100.0)	17 (40.48)	22 (52.38)	3 (7.14)	42 (100.0)	35 (37.63)	51 (54.84)	7 (7.53)	93 (100.0)

the proportions of women Pradhans participating regularly in performing different development activities were found only 6.45 per cent, though relatively at higher proportion in Gorakhpour (9.52 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (3.92 per cent). Also the overall participation of women Pradhans in different stages of the implementation of various development programmes was witnessed significantly more satisfactory in the village Panchayats comprising of Gorakhpur as compared to the Saharanpur. The Pradhans in Gorakhpur were scoring marginally better participation than the Pradhans representing district Saharanpur (30.95 per cent) in matters related to the decision making process for the identification of beneficiaries which were to be covered under the certain development programmes and in the initiation and selection of different development activities for the purpose of the

implementation in their concerned village Panchayats. In all, the proportion of women Pradhans participating in the implementation stages and the supervision of different development programmes, regularly and casually together, accounted for 42.86 per cent in Gorakhpur as against of 31.37 per cent in Saharanpur. But, among the women Pradhans which were making at least some visits either regularly or casually at the sites of the functioning of development programmes for its supervision were again estimated to be significantly higher in the former district (40.48 per cent) than in the latter district (35.29 per cent). But it has to be kept in mind that 3.92 per cent Pradhans in latter district and 2.38 per cent Pradhans in

TABLE 6.5: PARTICIPATION IN DIFFERENT STAGES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

PURPOSE	SAHARANPUR				GORAKHPUR				TOTAL			
	No	Regu- larly	Occas- ionally	Total	No	Regu- larly	Occas- ionally	Total	No	Regu- larly	Occas- ionally	Total
Preparation of Proposals	37	2	12	51	27	3	12	42	64	5	24	93
	(72.55)	(3.92)	(23.53)	(100.0)	(64.29)	(7.14)	(28.57)	(100.0)	(68.82)	(5.38)	(25.80)	(100.0)
Initiation of Activity	34	5	12	51	13	9	20	42	47	14	32	93
	(66.67)	(9.80)	(23.53)	(100.0)	(39.95)	(21.43)	(47.62)	(100.0)	(50.54)	(15.05)	(34.41)	(100.0)
Deciding for implemen-tation	35	2	14	51	26	4	12	42	61	6	26	93
	(68.63)	(3.92)	(27.45)	(100.0)	(61.91)	(9.52)	(28.57)	(100.0)	(65.59)	(6.45)	(27.96)	(100.0)
Deciding for choosing beneficiaries	35	1	15	51	29	2	11	42	64	3	26	93
	(68.63)	(1.96)	(29.41)	(100.0)	(69.85)	(4.76)	(26.19)	(100.0)	(68.82)	(3.23)	(27.95)	(100.0)
Visiting to sites for supervision	33	2	16	51	25	1	16	42	58	3	32	93
	(64.71)	(3.92)	(31.37)	(100.0)	(59.52)	(2.38)	(38.10)	(100.0)	(62.37)	(3.23)	(34.46)	(100.0)
Average Total	35	2	14	51	24	4	14	42	59	6	28	93
	(68.63)	(3.92)	(27.45)	(100.0)	(57.14)	(9.52)	(33.34)	(100.0)	(63.44)	(6.45)	(30.11)	(100.0)

✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓

former districts were only regularly involved while 31.37 per cent in latter districts and 38.10 per cent in former one were casually involved in the supervision of different development programmes which were performed at different village Panchayats level. The women Pradhans who were casually involved in the implementation and supervision of development schemes were accompanied either by their male family members or the male representatives of concerned village Panchayats to perform the concerned functions.

IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPERVISION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The analysis undertaken in this part have attempted to examine the extent of differences was prevailing in the nature of participation of women Pradhans possessing different levels of education in the implementation and supervision of different development programmes. The analysis depicted that, over and above, the level of educational attainment among women Pradhans was positively influencing their participation and performance in the supervision of different activities. In otherwords, the participation rate of women Pradhan in performing the supervision of different programmes was consistently increasing with the increase of every additional level of educational attainment among them. Since the participation rate of women Pradhans with no education and below primary level of education was reported to be 25 per cent and 20.59 per cent respectively, but it increased at 66.67 per cent for middle level educated Pradhans and as higher as 83.33 per cent for Pradhans with above secondary level of education. However, the participation of women Pradhans having no education or below primary level of education was

found significantly at higher extent in Saharanpur (24.32 per cent) than in Gorakhpur (20.00 per cent). But among the women Pradhans with above secondary level of education, all of them in former district as against 75 per cent in latter district were found participating in the implementation and supervision of various development programmes in their concerned village Panchayats.

However, we again found that the male family members of the women Pradhans were providing limited opportunities to them for participating in the implementation of various development programmes in different village Panchayats of both the districts, though relatively at larger extent in Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur. The domination of male family members of women Pradhans in performing various activities of Panchayats and the implementation of development programmes was further visualised at significantly larger level in the village Panchayats which were headed by women with no education and below primary level of education and it varied according to the level of educational attainments among the women Pradhans.

Thus, considering into account to these emerging facts it may be pointed out that the domination and over interference of male family members of women Pradhans in the different activities of Panchayats and performing various development activities, even in controlling and over utilising the powers and duties of Pradhans, can be possibly minimised if the initiatives are to be carried out to provide increasing opportunities to well educated women for getting elected as the Pradhans of village Pradhans. This could be possible either the fixation of a minimum level of educational qualification for the eligibility of Pradhans or the village having the

availability of well educated women are to be purposely selected as reserved for women Pradhans, through offering at least some relaxations and flexibility in the criteria as fixed for the identification of reserved village Panchayats for women Pradhans.

TABLE 6.6 : PURPOSE AND NATURE OF PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

PURPOSE/NATURE	SAHARANPUR	GORAKHPUR	TOTAL
Initiation of Work Only	2 (11.11)	4 (23.53)	6 (17.14)
Casually Monitoring	6 (33.33)	5 (29.41)	11 (31.43)
Distribution of Wages	6 (33.33)	2 (11.76)	8 (22.86)
Implementation for whole duration	4 (22.22)	6 (35.29)	10 (28.57)
ALL PURPOSES	18 (100.00)	17 (100.00)	35 (100.00)

Enquiring about the nature and purpose of participation of Pradhans in the supervision of the implementation of different development programmes, the analysis revealed that significantly a highest proportion of them were participating casually for the purpose of monitoring the progress of work at different stages of its implementation (31.43 per cent) while a second majority of Pradhans (28.57 per cent) were regularly involved in all stages of the implementation of programmes for full duration followed by 22.86 per cent were seen particularly only in the stages of the distribution of wages and a lowest proportion of Pradhans were noted participating only at the initial stages of the implementation of various development programmes in their respective village Panchayats. Across the districts, the

proportions of Pradhans participating at each of the stages of the implementation of programmes were found significantly larger (35.29 per cent) in Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur (22.22 per cent). In Saharanpur a highest proportion of Pradhans (33.33 per cent) were observed participating each at the stages of the distribution of wages to the beneficiaries which covered under various development programmes and casually monitoring the progress of work while a lowest proportions of 11.11 per cent at the initial stages of the initiation of development work.

Thus, it may be pointed out that the overall participation of women Pradhans in various matters related to undertaking efforts for getting allotment of different development schemes and projects from different Government Departments, including Block Panchayats, deciding for the identification of beneficiaries for covering under different programmes, preparation of proposals for initiating certain

TABLE 6.7 : REASONS FOR LACKING PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

PURPOSE/NATURE	NUMBERS OF RESPONSES		
	SAHARANPUR	GORAKHPUR	TOTAL
Busy in Household Work	27 (81.82)	24 (96.00)	51 (87.93)
Lacking freedom from the family	14 (42.42)	13 (52.00)	27 (46.55)
Better Supervision Capacity of Men	30 (90.91)	21 (84.00)	51 (87.93)
No need to supervise	11 (33.33)	12 (48.00)	23 (39.66)
NUMBERS OF RESPONDENTS	33 (100.00)	25 (100.00)	58 (100.00)

schemes and in different stages of the implementation, supervision and monitoring work progress of various development programmes was significantly at better level in the village Panchayats comprising of district Gorakhpur as compared to district Saharanpur.

REASONS FOR LACKING PARTICIPATION

The analysis on assessing about the reasons behind unsatisfactory participation of women Pradhans in different stages of the implementation of development programmes, we found that over burden and excessive involvement in the household related activities was the basic reason for a highest proportions of Pradhans (96 per cent) in Gorakhpur while the understanding of around 91 per cent Pradhans in Saharanpur was that the men segment among their family and the men members of PRI's can perform the implementation and supervision of different activities more successfully than the women. Considerably a lowest proportions of Pradhans (39.66 percent), comprising 48 per cent in Gorakhpur as against 33.33 per cent in Saharanpur reported that they never felt any need to supervise the implementation of different development programmes which were undertaken in their concerned village Panchayats because the beneficiaries which were engaged in performing various programmes were contributing a very appreciable role in successfully and timely completion of the concerned activities.

TABLE 6.8: PROBLEMS FROM DIFFERENT INDIVIDUALS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMMES

PURPOSE	KIND OF PROBLEM											
	SAHARANPUR				GORAKHPUR				TOTAL			
	Lacking co-operation for completion of Schemes	Lacking participation in meetings	Existing Problems in the selection of Beneficiaries and site selection	Total	Lacking co-operation for completion of Schemes	Lacking participation in meetings	Existing Problems in the selection of Beneficiaries and site selection	Total	Lacking co-operation for completion of Schemes	Lacking participation in meetings	Existing Problems in the selection of Beneficiaries and site selection	Total
General Public	7 (38.43)	7 (38.43)	9 (39.14)	23 (100.0)	11 (55.00)	4 (28.00)	5 (25.00)	20 (100.0)	18 (41.86)	11 (25.58)	14 (32.56)	43 (100.0)
Male PRI's Members	5 (33.33)	7 (46.67)	3 (28.00)	15 (100.0)	3 (20.00)	8 (53.33)	4 (26.67)	15 (100.0)	8 (26.67)	15 (50.00)	7 (23.33)	30 (100.0)
Female PRIs Members	3 (16.67)	10 (55.56)	5 (27.77)	18 (100.0)	2 (12.5)	12 (75.00)	2 (12.5)	16 (100.0)	5 (14.71)	22 (64.71)	7 (20.58)	34 (100.0)
Gram Sabha Members	2 (33.33)	1 (16.67)	3 (50.00)	6 (100.0)	2 (33.33)	2 (33.33)	2 (33.34)	6 (100.0)	4 (33.33)	3 (25.00)	5 (41.67)	12 (100.0)

PROBLEMS EXISTING IN THE PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTATION

The women Pradhans were found facing variety of problems from the representatives of PRI's, members of old Gram Sabhas and the general public of concerned village Panchayats in successful implementation of various development programmes. The lacking support and co-operation of local people was mainly seen in the different stages of the implementation of various development schemes and welfare activities, deciding for initiating any programmes and the identification of beneficiaries and site section for covering under certain programmes. However, significantly a highest proportion of women Pradhans (41.86 per cent) comprising around one third in Saharanpur and 55 per cent in Gorakhpur, had complained that they lacked any co-operation from the General public in solving problems which

generally occurred in the implementation of certain programmes and another 53 per cent of women representatives of PRI's from each of the districts reported that the local people were practicing unfavourable attitude and co-operation in deciding for initiating any kind of development schemes while significantly a highest proportion of the representatives of Old Gram Sabhas in both the districts, Saharanpur (50 per cent) and Gorakhpur (33.33 per cent) were revealed creating variety of problems in the identification of beneficiaries to be proposed for covering under various development programmes and the selection of sites and locations where the programmes were to be launched (Table 6.9). Further it was noticed that the prevailing castism, communalisation and illiteracy among a larger segment of population were the main factors behind the lacking participation of the local people and the members of PRI's in successful implementation of various development programmes.

BENEFICIARIES COVERED UNDER DIFFERENT SCHEMES

Since the identification of beneficiaries to be covered under the various developments programmes should be carried out at the meetings of Village Panchayats by the Pradhans through consulting the members of PRI's and other local participants. However, our analysis depicted that the village Panchayats in both the districts had adopted differential kinds of methodologies for this purpose during last year. Since the identification of beneficiaries for covering under different programmes in the meetings of village Panchayats was carried out by only 39.78 per cent Pradhans, consisting 40.48 per cent in Gorakhpur and 29.21 per cent in Saharanpur. In a second majority of the village Panchayats (32.26 per cent), the

people living below the poverty line had directly approached to the Pradhans for their inclusion with different development programmes, particularly with employment oriented programmes, such as J.R.Y. Consultation with the representatives of PRI's by the Pradhans for the identification of beneficiaries was undertaken only in 16.13 per cent village Panchayats while in lowest proportion of (11.83 per cent) village Panchayats, 13.73 per cent in Saharanpur and 9.52 per cent in Gorakhpur, the Pradhans had never consulted either to the members of PRI's or any local people for the identification of beneficiaries to be covered under various programmes in the past.

It appeared that the local people were hardly taking any interest in involving themselves with the various employment oriented programmes because the provisions of remunerations which were fixed for providing to the beneficiaries under these programmes were reported relatively very low as compared to the prevailing wage rates for undertaking similar categories of work in other non-agricultural activities in the local areas. Therefore, around 14 per cent of the Pradhans had reported that they had not been in a position to maximise the participation of local people in the implementation of certain development programmes, particularly in performing work related to Jawahar Rojgar Yojana. However, the proportions of Pradhans, which were getting adequate numbers of manpower for performing various development activities, were significantly higher in Saharanpur (88.24 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (83.83 per cent). The shortfall in the supply of manpower for the completion of development programmes in different village Panchayats was generally met by Pradhans through its supply from the nearby towns and the surrounding villages.

TABLE 6.9 : CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF BENEFICIARIES

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION	DISTRICTS NAME		
	SAHARANPUR	GORAKHPUR	TOTAL
Holding Meetings of Village Panchayats	20 (29.21)	17 (40.48)	37 (39.78)
Consulting with PRI's Members	8 (15.69)	7 (16.67)	15 (16.13)
Direct Consultation of Poor People	16 (31.37)	14 (33.33)	30 (32.26)
Self Selection	7 (13.73)	4 (9.52)	11 (11.83)
Total	51 (100.00)	42 (100.00)	93 (100.00)

Analysing the pattern of beneficiaries covered and mandays employment provided to different segment of local population under the various development programmes which were introduced in different village Panchayats it was found that under the Indira Avas Yojana which was implemented in 53 village Panchayats, consisting of significantly larger numbers of village Panchayats in Saharanpur (88.24 per cent) than in Gorakhpur (19.05 per cent), had benefited to 145 households, consisting 127 households in former district as against only 18 households in latter districts. However, the proportions of women benefited under the concerned programme were found significantly at higher extent as compared to women covered under other programmes, but the proportions of the women covered under this programme were comparatively at lesser extent than the men in both the districts. Since, of the total houses which were constructed under the IAY, the proportions of houses allocated to women accounted for 35.17 per cent, consisting 44.44 per cent in Gorakhpur and

33.86 per cent in Saharanpur. The share of women in availing the opportunity to get the benefits on various manners under the different components of IRDP was registered only around 26 per cent, comprising relatively at larger extent in Gorakhpur (27.49 per cent) than in Saharanpur (24.85 per cent). Consequently, among the 12 households, which were, provided the facility of toilets in Saharanpur, the share of women headed households was accounted for 33.33 per cent. On the whole, among the 738 families/beneficiaries covered under the various poverty alleviation programmes and the programmes initiated for providing self employment opportunities under the different components of IRDP, the proportion of women beneficiaries was indicated to be around 28 per cent, though it was marginally at higher level in Gorakhpur (28.62 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (27.51 per cent).

TABLE 6.10 : AVAILABILITY OF BENEFICIARIES AND MAN POWER FOR PERFORMING DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

(Pradhan)

AVAILABILITY OF BENEFICIARIES	NAME OF THE DISTRICTS		
	SAHARANPUR	GORAKHPUR	TOTAL
Adequately	45	35	80
	(88.24)	(83.33)	(86.02)
Inadequately	6	7	13
	(11.76)	(16.67)	(13.98)
Total	51	42	93
	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)

PARTICIPATION IN J.R.Y.

Since the implementation of JRY was reported as an important activity of almost the village Panchayats in both the districts. However, the concerns and objectives of introducing JRY by the Government is somehow different than the other programmes. Since, under the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, the emphasis has been provided for the generation of employment opportunity for local people, those are living below the poverty line, through undertaking certain construction and other productive activities. It was noticed that the JRY which was implemented in all the village Panchayats had provided the benefit of employment to 5946 workforce by employing them for 94787 days during last year, and the per worker average mandays employment was accounted for 15.94 days. Per Panchayat average numbers of mandays employment which generated under performing JRY was estimated to be 1019 days, consisting 287 days for women as against 732 days for men. As far as the participation of women in finding employment opportunities under the implementation of JRY was found considerably at lower extent as compared to their male counterpart in different village Panchayats. Since the participation of women in performing different work under the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana was reported only 26.56 per cent, consisting of 29.33 per cent in Gorakhpur as against 25.45 per cent in Saharanpur.

Similarly, per village Panchayat average numbers of mandays employment which were generated for women were found comparatively at lower level than it were revealed for men. Of the total days of employment created under JRY, the share of

women was registered only 28.16 per cent, consisting of relatively at higher level in Gorakhpur (28.53 per cent) than in Saharanpur (27.52 per cent). However, in reality terms, the women had received the opportunity of employment for higher number of days (16.78 days) than the men (15.63 days). Across the district level, the average man days employment as generated under JRY for women in Gorakhpur were marginally at lower extent than the men but it was reversal in the case of Saharanpur. In addition to this, per village Panchayat mandays employment as generated for both men and women in Gorakhpur were estimated almost two and half folds higher than the case of Saharanpur. On the whole it appeared that the women have been well participating in almost the development programmes along with their male counterparts, but the participation rate of women, as the beneficiaries, was comparably at lower level than the men.

TABLE 6.11 : BENEFICIARIES COVERED UNDER DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

PROGRAMMES	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
I.R.D.P	248 (75.15)	82 (24.85)	330 (100.0)	182 (72.51)	69 (27.49)	251 (100.0)	430 (74.01)	151 (25.99)	581 (100.0)
Indira Avas Yojana	84 (66.14)	43 (33.86)	127 (100.0)	10 (55.56)	8 (44.44)	18 (100.0)	94 (64.83)	51 (35.17)	145 (100.0)
Toilet Facilities	8 (66.67)	4 (33.33)	12 (100.0)	-	-	-	8 (66.67)	4 (33.33)	12 (100.0)
ALL	340 (72.49)	129 (27.51)	469 (100.0)	192 (71.38)	77 (28.62)	269 (100.0)	532 (72.09)	206 (27.91)	738 (100.0)

TABLE 6.12 : PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT CREATED UNDER JRY

EMPLOYMENT	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Total Employment	2125	690	2815	2228	903	3131	4353	1593	5946
Per Panchayat	41	14	55	53	22	75	47	17	64
	(74.55)	(25.45)	(100.0)	(70.67)	(29.33)	(100.0)	(73.44)	(26.56)	(100.0)
Mandays Employment	21630	8211	29841	46429	18517	64946	68059	26728	98787
Per Panchayat	424	161	585	1105	441	1546	732	287	1019
	(72.48)	(27.52)	(100.0)	(71.47)	(28.53)	(100.0)	(71.84)	(28.16)	(100.0)
Per worker/Beneficiary	10.18	11.90	10.60	20.84	20.51	20.74	15.63	16.78	15.94

PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL LEVEL SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FUNCTIONS

It has generally been believed that increasing involvement of people in performing certain socio-economic and cultural activities, participating in the general gathering of people and carrying out different welfare activities for the interest of local people would certainly provide them the opportunities for improving and strengthening their social status, respect and honour from different segments of population, improving their leadership quality and developing independency culture among themselves. With these considerations we attempted to examine that at what extent the women Pradhans and women members have actually been involving and participating in different social and cultural functions and in solving the problems of disputes and

conflicts which occurs among the people of their village Panchayats. The local people had indicated that the Pradhans, as the head of village Panchayats, are generally invited and requested to participate in local level social ceremonies and functions. Considering our analysis into account we also found that the participation of women Pradhans was significantly at highest level in the various social ceremonies and marriages (90.32 per cent) followed by village functions (78.49 per cent) and in the local festivals (56.99 per cent) and lowest proportion of them were participating in the matters related to conflicts and disputes of local people (18.28 per cent).

TABLE 6.13 : PARTICIPATION OF PRADHANS IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND LOCAL FUNCTIONS

OCCASIONS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Marriage and Social Ceremonies	49 (96.08)	2 (3.92)	51 (100.0)	35 (83.33)	7 (16.67)	42 (100.0)	84 (90.32)	9 (9.68)	93 (100.0)
Village Functions	41 (80.39)	10 (19.61)	51 (100.0)	32 (76.19)	10 (23.81)	42 (100.0)	73 (78.49)	20 (21.51)	93 (100.0)
Disputes	10 (19.61)	41 (80.39)	51 (100.0)	7 (16.67)	35 (8.33)	42 (100.0)	17 (18.28)	76 (81.72)	93 (100.0)
Cultural Programmes	30 (58.82)	21 (41.18)	51 (100.0)	28 (66.67)	14 (33.33)	42 (100.0)	58 (62.37)	35 (37.63)	93 (100.0)
Festivals	31 (60.78)	20 (39.22)	51 (100.0)	22 (52.38)	20 (47.62)	42 (100.0)	53 (56.99)	40 (43.01)	93 (100.0)
Average	32 (62.75)	19 (37.25)	51 (100.0)	25 (59.52)	17 (40.48)	42 (100.0)	57 (61.27)	36 (38.71)	93 (100.0)

TABLE 6.14 : PARTICIPATION OF THE MEMBERS IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND LOCAL FUNCTIONS

OCCASIONS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Marriage and Social Ceremonies	191 (88.02)	26 (11.98)	217 (100.0)	153 (81.82)	34 (18.18)	187 (100.0)	344 (85.15)	60 (14.85)	404 (100.0)
Village Functions	181 (83.41)	36 (16.59)	217 (100.0)	177 (94.65)	10 (5.35)	187 (100.0)	358 (88.61)	46 (11.39)	404 (100.0)
Disputes	27 (12.44)	190 (87.56)	217 (100.0)	30 (16.04)	157 (83.96)	187 (100.0)	57 (14.11)	347 (86.89)	404 (100.0)
Cultural Programmes	187 (86.18)	30 (13.82)	217 (100.0)	180 (96.26)	7 (3.74)	187 (100.0)	367 (90.84)	37 (9.16)	404 (100.0)
Festivals	177 (81.57)	40 (18.43)	217 (100.0)	176 (94.12)	11 (5.88)	187 (100.0)	367 (87.38)	37 (12.62)	404 (100.0)
Average	153 (70.51)	64 (29.49)	217 (100.0)	143 (76.47)	44 (23.53)	187 (100.0)	296 (73.27)	108 (26.73)	404 (100.0)

The nature of participation of Pradhans in different local activities was emerged almost at similar level, in both the districts but the proportions of them participating in solving the problems of disputes and conflicts which occurred among people in different village Panchayats was reported marginally at larger level in Saharanpur as compared to Gorakhpur. In real terms the participation of women members was found more satisfactory than the cases of women Pradhans in attending the local ceremonies, functions and cultural programmes in both the sample districts. Since, the overall participation of women Pradhans in different functions, including the local disputes and conflicts, was averages at 73.27 per cent, consisting significantly at larger extent in district Gorakhpur (76.47 per cent) as compared to Saharanpur (70.51 per cent). The highest level of participation of women members was, however, seen in the local level cultural programmes (90.84 per cent) followed by

around 88 per cent each in the village functions and the festivals, 85 per cent in different social ceremonies and a lowest proportions of 14.11 per cent in the cases of disputes and conflicts which occurred among the local villagers. The women members which representing different village Panchayats of district Gorakhpur were found participating significantly at larger level than their counterparts in Saharanpur mainly in the village functions, occurrence of disputes and conflicts among people, cultural programmes and the local festivals while the women members of latter districts had better edge over their counterparts of former district in the participation of social ceremonies and the related household level functions.

CHAPTER VII

CHANGES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND EMPOWERMENT

THE unsatisfactory participation of both women Pradhans and members in the discussions relating to making decisions for certain matters and general participation in the meetings which were organised at the level of Block Panchayats as well as village Panchayats was well reflected in the analysis which carried out in the preceding chapters. Also the women representatives were found marginally participating in the initiation, implementation and the supervision of different development programmes and welfare activities which were so far undertaken in different village Panchayats. However, a little shift in the occupational pattern of employment of both Pradhans and Members was revealed in both the districts, after their representing different village Panchayats. A marginal proportion of both the Pradhans as well as members had received the opportunity of visiting outside their households and villages and the freedom to participate in the family's business, mainly in agricultural activities. Some of the women had also availed the opportunities to strengthened their entrepreneurship capability for establishing the small shops in their villages and nearby towns. The shifts in the occupational pattern of employment of small numbers of representatives of PRI's were mainly visualised in terms of leaving to engage in the household related activities and joining mainly to wage paid occupations and agricultural activities of their

households. A little numbers of representatives of village Panchayats in both the districts had left working as agricultural labourers and other related low prestigious occupations and they had started participating in their household activities, in fact some of them have established own shops. However, the occupational shifts of women representatives of PRI's and the proportions of them who reported to have developed entrepreneurship capability to establish shops and related establishment were noticed significantly at higher extent in district Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur.

It was latter revealed that both women Pradhans and the members had availed significant opportunity and freedom from their families to participate in local level gatherings, such as social functions, cultural programmes and related activities which were generally been organised at village panchayat levels. However, the level and extent of participation in concerned activities was witnessed relatively at more successful manner for women members than the case of women Pradhans in the village Panchayats of both the districts, but in all, the Pradhans as well as members of Gorakhpur were found participating in different local social and cultural activities at greater extent than their counterpart of Saharanpur.

IMPROVEMENTS IN SOCIAL STATUS

The nature and extent of respect and honour which the representatives of village Panchayats had availed through participating in different local social and cultural activities was found mainly depending upon the kind of reputation they have so far achieved in performing certain welfare and development activities and in bringing

improvements in the socio-economic conditions of different segments of population in the concerned village Panchayats. This was well depicted by the fact that the proportions of both Pradhans and members of different PRI's which received at least some degree of respect and honour from the local people in each of the social ceremonies and cultural festivals were significantly at lower level than the actual numbers of them who had participated in concerned activities, in the concerned village Panchayats of both the districts. In spite of these facts, over one third of both Pradhans and the members of PRI's had availed the opportunity of bringing significant improvements in their social standings through participating in various local level social and cultural activities after representing the village Panchayats.

However, among Pradhans, significantly a highest proportions of them had improved their social status through participating in the social ceremonies (50.54 per cent), consisting 56.86 per cent in Saharnapur and 42.86 per cent in Gorakhpur, followed by 48.39 per cent in the in the local functions while a lowest proportions of 7.53 per cent through involving themselves in matter related to disputes and conflicts which occurred among the people of concerned village Panchayats. On an average, the proportions of women Pradhans which had indicated to have experienced at least some improvements in their social status after representing PRI's were reported marginally at higher level in district Saharanpur than the case of district Gorakhpur.

But the proportions of women reported to have experienced certain levels of improvements in their social status through participating in local social and cultural activities and festivals were found relatively at larger level among the members as compared to the Pradhans. Significantly a highest proportions of women members

TABLE 7.1(a) : EXPERIENCED IMPROVEMENTS IN SOCIAL STATUS THROUGH PARTICIPATING IN DIFFERENT LOCAL LEVEL SOCIAL ACTIVITIES BY THE PRADHANS

OCCASIONS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	YES	NO	TOTAL	YES	NO	TOTAL	YES	No	Total
Marriage and Social Ceremonies	29 (56.86)	22 (43.14)	51 (100.0)	18 (42.86)	24 (57.14)	42 (100.0)	47 (50.54)	46 (49.46)	93 (100.0)
Village Functions	29 (56.86)	22 (43.14)	51 (100.0)	16 (38.10)	26 (61.90)	42 (100.0)	45 (48.39)	48 (51.61)	93 (100.0)
Disputes	4 (7.84)	47 (92.16)	51 (100.0)	3 (7.14)	39 (72.86)	42 (100.0)	7 (7.53)	86 (42.97)	93 (100.0)
Cultural Programmes	12 (23.53)	39 (76.47)	51 (100.0)	16 (38.10)	26 (61.90)	42 (100.0)	28 (30.11)	65 (69.89)	93 (100.0)
Festivals	16 (31.37)	35 (68.63)	51 (100.0)	8 (19.05)	34 (80.95)	42 (100.0)	24 (25.81)	69 (74.19)	93 (100.0)
Average	18 (35.29)	33 (64.71)	51 (100.0)	12 (40.00)	30 (60.00)	42 (100.0)	30 (32.26)	63 (67.74)	93 (100.0)

TABLE 7.1(b) : EXPERIENCED IMPROVEMENTS IN SOCIAL STATUS THROUGH PARTICIPATING IN DIFFERENT LOCAL LEVEL SOCIAL ACTIVITIES BY THE MEMBERS

OCCASIONS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	YES	NO	TOTAL	YES	NO	TOTAL	YES	No	Total
Marriage and Social Ceremonies	94 (43.32)	123 (56.68)	217 (100.0)	61 (32.62)	126 (67.38)	187 (100.0)	155 (38.37)	249 (61.63)	404 (100.0)
Village Functions	107 (49.31)	110 (50.69)	217 (100.0)	95 (50.80)	92 (49.20)	187 (100.0)	202 (50.00)	202 (50.00)	404 (100.0)
Disputes	2 (0.92)	215 (99.08)	217 (100.0)	16 (8.56)	171 (91.44)	187 (100.0)	18 (4.46)	386 (95.54)	404 (100.0)
Cultural Programme	88 (40.55)	129 (59.45)	217 (100.0)	87 (46.52)	100 (53.48)	187 (100.0)	175 (43.32)	229 (56.68)	404 (100.0)
Festivals	101 (46.54)	116 (53.46)	217 (100.0)	92 (49.20)	95 (50.80)	187 (100.0)	193 (47.77)	211 (52.23)	404 (100.0)
Average	78 (35.94)	139 (64.04)	217 (100.0)	70 (37.43)	117 (62.57)	187 (100.0)	148 (36.63)	256 (63.37)	404 (100.0)

had visualised at least some degree of improvements in their social standings through participating in local level functions (50 per cent) followed by representing local festivals and melas (47.77 per cent) and cultural programmes (43.32 per cent) in both the districts together. The perceptions of both Pradhans and Members were that the men population generally provides better extent of honour and social respect than the women to them in different local level ceremonies and functions. Though, the women participants were observed hardly take any initiatives even to come close with both Pradhan and membersd in most of the functions excepting in the cases of arising conflicts and disputes among their families.

CHANGES EXPERIENCED IN THE PARTICIPATION OF HOUSEHOLOD'S AFFAIRS

Analysing the pattern and extent of changes which occurred in the participation of Pradhans and members in different activities and the affairs of their households as a result of getting opportunity to represent village Panchayats it revealed that there had not been any significant changes in performing the routine of work related to household affairs, such as looking after the children and old family members, the care of animals, cooking foods and washing cloths of the family members. Since all the Pradhans and members of different village Panchayats were noticed regularly engaged in these household related activities in both the districts. Also, a very large percentages of both Pradhans (78.49 per cent) as well as members had reported that they did not experience any kind of changes occurring in performing the activities and association with the affairs of their households after electing the representatives of concerned PRI's. However, the proportions of women Pradhans which had experienced at least some extent of changes in this regard were found

significantly larger in Saharanpur (23.53 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (19.05 per cent), but in the cases of the members the concerned situation was emerged reversal among the sample districts. The nature of participation of a highest proportions of Pradhans in Saharanpur had increased in the agricultural activities (11.83 per cent) while in Gorakhpur a highest proportion of them had received the opportunity to participate in the different economic activities and decision making process on certain subjects of their households and the freedom to participate in the locally organised social and cultural functions (11.90 per cent). Changes perceived in decision making processes on various matters of the families was reported by comparably a larger proportion of Pradhans from Saharanpur (11.76 per cent) than from Gorakhpur (9.52 per cent). But a lowest proportion of Pradhans (3.23 per cent), comprising 1.96 per cent in Saharanpur and 4.76 per cent in Gorakhpur could possibly succeeded to participate in their family business after representing PRIs.

Similarly, among the women members, a highest proportion of them (6.93 per cent), consisting 7.37 per cent in Saharanpur and 6.42 per cent in Gorakhpur had received the opportunity to visit nearby markets for the purpose of attending melas and cultural programmes and to purchase certain commodities for their households and a lowest proportions of them had started participating in their family business (0.99), though around 6 per cent of the members from each district had started to participate in matters related to decision making process of their families on various subjects while 5 per cent of them had availed the freedom of spending own income according to their choice in each of the districts.

TABLE 7.2 : EXTENT OF CHANGES EXPERIENCED IN THE AFFAIRS OF FAMILY

TYPE OF CHANGES	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Child Care and related household Activities	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Participation in Agriculture	9 (17.65)	11 (5.07)	20 (7.76)	2 (4.76)	9 (4.81)	11 (4.80)	11 (11.83)	20 (4.95)	31 (6.24)
Participation in family Business	1 (1.96)	2 (0.92)	3 (1.12)	2 (4.76)	2 (1.07)	4 (1.45)	3 (3.23)	4 (0.99)	7 (1.41)
Deciding Family Affairs	6 (11.76)	13 (5.99)	19 (7.09)	4 (9.52)	10 (5.34)	14 (6.11)	10 (10.75)	23 (5.69)	33 (6.64)
Decision in the Expenses of Family	4 (7.84)	3 (1.38)	7 (2.61)	5 (11.90)	6 (3.21)	11 (4.80)	9 (9.68)	9 (2.23)	18 (3.62)
Freedom to spent own Income	4 (7.84)	11 (5.07)	15 (5.60)	3 (7.14)	8 (4.28)	11 (4.80)	7 (7.53)	19 (4.70)	26 (5.23)
Freedom to move outside village	7 (13.73)	5 (2.30)	12 (4.48)	4 (9.52)	6 (3.21)	10 (4.37)	11 (11.83)	11 (2.72)	22 (4.43)
Participation in functions	2 (3.92)	13 (5.99)	15 (5.60)	5 (11.90)	11 (5.88)	16 (6.99)	7 (7.53)	24 (5.84)	31 (6.24)
Visiting Markets	7 (13.73)	16 (7.37)	23 (8.58)	3 (7.14)	12 (6.42)	15 (6.55)	10 (10.75)	28 (6.93)	38 (7.65)
No Change	39 (76.47)	196 (90.32)	235 (87.69)	34 (80.95)	170 (90.91)	204 (89.08)	73 (78.49)	316 (90.59)	439 (88.33)
Total Sample	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

IMPOSITION OF RESTRICTIONS BY THE HOUSEHOLDS:

It has universally been well recognised that the marginalisation and discrimination of women in terms of imposing certain restrictions against them by their families for participating in various activities, both inside and outside villages, and in providing an opportunity to participate in availing various facilities which directly or indirectly help in enhancing the life style and qualitative improvements in the personality were generally practiced in rural areas due to prevailing certain traditionally developed social evils and cultural backwardness. Considering these recognised fact into account we have further tried to examine about the kinds and the extent of restrictions were generally imposed by their households for carrying out to and limiting the scope of women representatives of PRI's to participate in different activities. Based on the analysis of our sample data we found that over half of the respondents among both Pradhans and members were facing certain restriction and lacking freedom from their families for visiting certain places and participating in desired activities. A highest numbers of women (80.08 per cent), comprising 81.72 per cent Pradhans and 79.70 per cent members, were not permitted by their families for attending the local level political movements and agitations, followed by 71.23 per cent comprising 72.77 per cent members and 64.52 per cent Pradhans were reported lacking freedom from their families for participating in matters related to the disputes and conflicts which occur among people at the level of village Panchayats. However, a highest proportions of them (83 per cent), 84 per cent members and 63 per cent Pradhans had acquired the freedom from their family members for participating various outdoor activities such as festivals and local Melas.

TABLE 7.3 : IMPOSITION OF RESTRICTIONS BY THE FAMILY MEMBERS

TYPE OF CHANGES	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Visiting Block Alone	32 (62.75)	158 (72.81)	190 (70.90)	26 (61.90)	110 (58.82)	136 (59.39)	58 (62.37)	268 (66.34)	326 (65.59)
Visiting Town Alone	28 (54.90)	149 (68.66)	177 (66.04)	17 (40.48)	73 (39.04)	90 (39.30)	45 (48.39)	222 (54.95)	267 (53.72)
Attending Disputed matters	36 (70.59)	179 (82.49)	215 (80.22)	24 (57.14)	115 (61.50)	139 (60.70)	60 (64.52)	294 (72.77)	354 (71.23)
Attending Festivals/ Melas	20 (39.22)	40 (18.43)	60 (22.39)	14 (33.33)	11 (5.88)	25 (10.92)	34 (36.56)	51 (12.62)	85 (17.10)
Attending Marriage/Social Functions	2 (3.92)	25 (11.52)	27 (10.07)	7 (16.67)	34 (18.18)	41 (17.90)	9 (9.68)	59 (14.60)	68 (13.68)
Joining Movements/ Agitation	41 (80.39)	176 (81.11)	217 (80.97)	35 (83.33)	146 (78.07)	181 (79.04)	76 (81.72)	322 (79.70)	398 (80.08)
Average	27 (52.94)	121 (55.76)	148 (55.22)	21 (50.00)	82 (83.85)	103 (44.98)	48 (51.61)	203 (50.25)	251 (50.50)
Total Sample	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

Across the districts level, the freedom to participate in different social and cultural activities at village level and visiting to the offices of Block Panchayats had achieved significantly at greater extent by the Pradhans as compared to members of different village Panchayats in both the districts. Among the Pradhans, the proportions of them lacking freedom from their families for participating in almost the local activities, excepting participating in local level political movements and attending social ceremonies were found significantly at larger level in Saharanpur as compared to Gorakhpur. However, the kind of situation which was emerging in terms of restrictions imposed against the participation of women members in different social and cultural functions by their families was almost at similar level between these two districts.

REASONS FOR IMPOSITION OF RESTRICTIONS

Incorporating the responses of the representatives of sample village Panchayats regarding the causes of imposition of various restrictions against their participation in different local level social functions and cultural activities and moving outside the households by their family members, it was well visualised that the deeply developed various social evils and cultural backwardness in rural areas were the most important dominating factors which were restricting the participation of a highest proportion of women (85.92 per cent), consisting 82.79 per cent Pradhans and 86.63 per cent members of PRI's in various locally organised social and cultural

TABLE 7.4 : REASONS FOR RESTRICTION IMPOSED BY FAMILY MEMBERS

REASONS OF RESTRICTION	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Illiteracy and Conservative Attitude of Parents	19 (37.25)	131 (60.37)	150 (55.98)	12 (28.57)	105 (56.15)	117 (51.10)	31 (33.33)	236 (58.42)	267 (53.72)
Social Restrictions	45 (88.23)	190 (87.56)	235 (87.69)	32 (76.19)	160 (85.56)	192 (83.84)	77 (82.79)	350 (86.63)	427 (85.92)
Overburden of Housework	32 (62.74)	121 (73.73)	153 (56.09)	32 (76.19)	120 (64.17)	152 (66.38)	64 (68.82)	241 (69.31)	305 (69.22)
Lacking Freedom to Visit Alone	40 (78.43)	175 (80.65)	215 (80.22)	29 (69.05)	77 (41.18)	106 (46.29)	69 (74.19)	252 (62.38)	321 (64.59)
Lacking Accessibility	23 (45.10)	110 (50.69)	133 (49.63)	18 (42.86)	90 (48.13)	108 (47.16)	41 (44.09)	200 (49.50)	241 (48.49)
Total Sample	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	167 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

activities. However, the problems of social backwardness was found more seriously developed among the different castes and religious segment of population in Saharanpur as compared to Gorakhpur.

The reason such as over burden of household related activities was found limiting the participation of a secondary majority of the respondents (69.22 per cent), comprising 68.82 per cent Pradhans and 69.31 per cent members in different social activities while lowest proportion of (48.49 per cent) women, 49.50 per cent members and 44.09 per cent Pradhans had reported that the lacking accessibility to the means of transport for visiting certain places was restricting their scope of participation mainly in social, political and cultural activities which were organised outside villages and for participating in certain activities which were performed at the Block Panchayat level. In fact, the problems of prevailing traditional social and cultural systems had been limiting the freedom of women mainly in visiting Block Panchayats, Melas and festivals which were generally organised outside their villages and at longer distances, particularly during night.

Further, the analysis revealed that the proportion of respondents which were lacking opportunities to participate in various activities according to their choice due to reasons such as prevailing larger extent of illiteracy and conservative attitude among their family members, traditionally developed social and cultural backwardness among the households, lacking accessibility to roads and the means of transport facilities, and lacking freedom from family to move alone from concerned village for longer distances were reported significantly at larger level in Saharanpur as compared to Goprakhpur. However, the proportion of women lacking their

participation in different local activities due to excessive burden of household related activities was found significantly higher in the former district than the latter one (Table 7.4).

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE NATURE OF CHANGES EXPERIENCED IN SOCIAL STATUS

It was further pointed out that over and above around half of the total representatives of different village Panchayats had not visualise any kind of improvements in their social status so far after representing PRI's, though the proportion of such Pradhans and members were reported significantly higher in Saharanpur as compared to Gorakhpur. But the proportion of women which had experienced at least some changes in their social status were found relatively larger among the Pradhans than the members in both the districts, because of the obvious fact that the participation of women Pradhans in different activities of local institutions and performing different activities of village Panchayats, implementation of various development programmes and welfare schemes and the meetings which were organised at the level of Block Panchayats and Village Panchayats, was revealed more satisfactory than the case of the members of PRI's of both the districts.

However, some interesting picture was found emerging in terms of the perceptions of Pradhans about their past experiences in realising the extent of changes which occurred in their social status through participating in various activities of different categories of local institutions such as Block Panchayats, village Panchayats, Nyaya Panchayats, at household level and among the different institutions of women.

Since the perceptions of a highest proportions of Pradhans were that they realised greater extent of respect and honoured place from different segment of population while attending relatively larger categories of institutions such as Block Panchayats and Nyay Panchayats as compared to smaller size of Institutions such as village Panchayats and at household level. This gives an impression that due to certain kinds of limitations imposed by rural backward social and cultural systems against women they were lacking the opportunity and freedom to participate openly and independently according to their choice in several matters and activities and even in exposing themselves by expressing views on certain issues before the participants belonging to their families or the villagers in the small size of local institutions such as village Panchayats and households. However, such restrictions against women were seen narrowing down according to the size of institutions such as the Nyay Panchayats and Block Panchayats level which meetings are represented by the people of various village Panchayats excepting their family members and the villagers. Thus, it appeared that increasing involvement of women Pradhans in different activities and the affairs of relatively larger size of institutions had directly provided them an opportunity for bringing certain level of improvements in their social status. It may, therefore, be argued that frequently holding the meetings of Block Panchayats with ensuring and maximising the participation of both Pradhans and the members of PRI's in its meetings could be an important measure for developing independency culture, self confidence and to generate inbuilt capacity among women to participate in different activities of these institutions and thus achieving significant improvements in their social status and empowerment.

TABLE 7.5 : IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES EXPERIENCED IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS BY THE PRADHANS AND MEMBERS OF PRI's

PERCEPTIONS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Within village Panchayat	21 (41.18)	71 (32.72)	92 (34.33)	20 (47.62)	63 (33.69)	83 (36.24)	41 (44.09)	134 (33.17)	176 (36.21)
Nyaya Panchayat	18 (35.29)	66 (30.41)	84 (31.34)	30 (71.43)	49 (26.20)	79 (34.50)	48 (51.61)	115 (28.47)	163 (32.80)
Block Level/ Tehsil Level	23 (45.10)	2 (1.83)	24 (8.96)	27 (64.29)	4 (2.14)	31 (13.54)	50 (53.76)	6 (1.49)	56 (11.27)
Among the Groups of Women	26 (50.98)	109 (50.23)	135 (50.37)	29 (69.05)	97 (51.87)	126 (55.02)	55 (59.14)	206 (50.99)	261 (52.52)
In the family Affaires	12 (23.53)	21 (9.68)	33 (12.31)	8 (19.05)	17 (9.09)	25 (10.92)	20 (21.51)	38 (9.41)	58 (11.67)
In political activities	9 (17.65)	12 (5.53)	21 (7.84)	13 (30.95)	14 (7.49)	27 (11.79)	22 (23.68)	26 (6.44)	48 (9.86)
No Change	25 (49.02)	108 (49.77)	133 (49.63)	12 (28.27)	90 (48.13)	102 (44.54)	37 (39.78)	198 (49.01)	235 (47.28)
Total Sample	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

The perceptions of 52.52 per cent women, comprising relatively higher proportions among Pradhans (59.14 per cent) than the members (50.99 per cent), were that they experienced increasing improvements in their social status among the women population of concerned village Panchayats after representing PRI's. However, due to lesser extent of opportunities given to women to participate in different activities, particularly in matters related to decision making affairs, of their families a very small proportion of them (11.67 per cent), consisting 21.51 per cent Pradhans and 9.41 per cent members, reported that they had the experiences of getting very little changes in their social status at the household level. The proportion of women

which had availed the opportunity to improve their political status after representing concerned village Panchayats were found significantly at higher level among Pradhans (23.66 per cent) as compared to the members (6.44 per cent) and also the concerned proportions of both Pradhans and members were comparably much larger in Gorakhpur than the case of Saharanpur.

REASONS OF LACKING IMPROVEMENTS IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS:

The respondents had provided various kinds of explanations and determining factors which were directly and indirectly limiting the scope of increasing participation of women in different activities which can possibly help in bringing desired level of improvements in their socio-economic status and empowerment. The observations of a highest proportions of women (31.39 per cent), comprising 15.05 per cent Pradhans and 35.15 per cent members were that the excessive domination of men and the rich segment of people in every types of activities, meetings, decision making processes in performing various social and welfare activities in different village Panchayats and Block Panchayats level were experienced as the most important factors behind providing lesser extent of opportunities to them in participating certain activities and as the consequences they were lacking possible improvements in their socio-economic status. The women who complained about such practical problems were found significantly larger in Saharanpur (42.91 per cent) as compared to Gorakhpur (17.90 per cent). Prevailing illiteracy among themselves and the lacking freedom and motivations from the part of family members for carrying out certain activities, were found as the second major

problems enabling to one fourth of the representatives of different village Panchayats for making initiatives to improve their social status. However, another 21 per cent of women, comprising 27.96 per cent Pradhans and 19.31 per cent members were lacking the knowledge about their rights, functions and duties as provided under the 73rd constitutional amendment of Panchayati Raj Act for their favour. The proportions of Pradhans lacking such awareness were noted comparably much higher in Gorakhpur (38.10 per cent) than in Saharanpur (19.61 per cent) but the corresponding percentages of members were relatively higher in latter district (20.74 per cent) than the former one (17.65 per cent). The problems such as lack of leadership quality among the women; lacking initiatives from the part of the Block Panchayats for organising adequate numbers of different training programmes for educating women representatives of PRI's about their rights, and duties and to introduce sufficient numbers of women related development programmes and welfare activities; and the representation of relatively less qualified women in different village Panchayats were also experienced some of the other main reasons and bottlenecks before lacking improvements in the socio-economic status of women representatives of different village Panchahyats in both the districts. Around 17 per cent women, comprising 18.34 per cent from Gorakhpur and 17.16 per cent form Saharanpur, had visualised that the introduction various women related development programmes and maximising the participation of both local women and the women representatives of PRI's in different stages of the implementation of concerned programme will certainly prove as an important measure for improving the socio-economic status of women at a certain extent. (Table 7.6).

TABLE 7.6 : REASONS FOR LACKING IMPROVEMENTS IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

REASONS	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
Lack of Education	18 (35.29)	56 (25.81)	74 (27.61)	11 (26.19)	36 (19.25)	47 (20.52)	29 (31.18)	92 (22.77)	121 (24.36)
Lack of Motivation by family members	12 (23.53)	66 (30.41)	84 (29.10)	8 (19.05)	35 (18.72)	43 (18.78)	20 (21.51)	101 (25.00)	121 (24.36)
Lacking knowledge about their right function	10 (19.61)	45 (20.74)	55 (20.52)	16 (38.10)	33 (17.65)	49 (21.40)	26 (27.96)	78 (19.31)	104 (20.92)
Lack of leadership quality	9 (17.65)	20 (9.22)	29 (10.82)	5 (11.90)	35 (18.72)	40 (17.47)	14 (16.05)	55 (13.61)	69 (13.88)
Domination of Men and rich People	7 (13.73)	108 (49.77)	115 (42.91)	7 (16.67)	34 (18.18)	41 (17.90)	14 (15.05)	142 (35.15)	156 (31.39)
Need To Identify qualified women for PRI's	5 (9.80)	46 (21.20)	51 (19.03)	6 (14.29)	13 (6.95)	19 (8.30)	11 (11.83)	59 (14.60)	70 (14.08)
Lack of Initiatives to introduce women related development Programmes	5 (9.80)	41 (18.89)	46 (17.16)	11 (26.19)	31 (16.58)	42 (18.34)	16 (17.20)	72 (17.82)	88 (17.71)
Inadequate training from the Administrator	4 (7.84)	6 (2.76)	10 (3.73)	4 (9.52)	3 (1.60)	7 (3.06)	8 (8.60)	9 (2.23)	17 (3.42)
Total Sample	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

EXPECTATIONS OF EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH RESERVATION IN PRI's

We attempted to enquire from the Pradhans and members about their views and perceptions regarding the extent and level to which the recently introduced reservation policy in favour of women in different tiers of Panchayats could be a successful measure of Government inventions in bringing improvements in the socio-economic status and empowerment of women in rural areas. Analysing the responses of the women PRI's in this regard we found that a majority of around 62 per cent women, comprising 59.14 per cent Pradhans and 62.62 per cent members, had the impression that in the presently prevailing certain social evils and backward cultural system and purely marginalisation attitude of men against women in all respects in rural areas the proposed policy of reservation of seats for women candidates in Panchayati Raj System would hardly be a successful measure in achieving the goal related to the upliftment of socio-econonomic conditions and empowerment of women at least at the level of their village Panchayats.

Despite the fact that on the whole the picture which emerges shows a pessimistic attitude displayed by the Pradhans as well as members of PRI's regarding their socio-economic position as a result of the intervention of Governments in the form of initiation of reservation policy. It was interesting to find that this pessimistic attitude was the result of the perception of those women who were illiterates in our sample who account for 60.56 per cent. However, as we move up from the illiterate to the literate category we find that higher the educational attainment greater is the feeling

TABLE 7.7(a) : PERCEPTION OF PRADHANS ABOUT IMPROVING EMPOWERMENTS THROUGH RESERVATION IN PRIs IN THE FUTURE

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Illiterate	7 (30.43)	16 (69.57)	23 (100.0)	2 (40.00)	3 (60.00)	5 (100.0)	9 (32.14)	19 (67.86)	28 (100.0)
Literate	6 (42.86)	8 (57.14)	14 (100.0)	7 (35.00)	13 (65.00)	20 (100.0)	13 (38.24)	21 (61.76)	34 (100.0)
Primary	4 (57.14)	3 (42.86)	7 (100.0)	3 (33.33)	6 (66.67)	9 (100.0)	7 (43.75)	9 (56.25)	16 (100.0)
Middle	3 (60.00)	2 (40.00)	5 (100.0)	2 (50.00)	2 (50.00)	4 (100.0)	5 (55.56)	4 (44.44)	9 (100.0)
Secondary	1 (50.00)	1 (50.00)	2 (100.0)	3 (75.00)	1 (25.00)	4 (100.0)	4 (66.67)	2 (33.33)	6 (100.0)
Total Sample	21 (41.18)	30 (58.82)	51 (100.0)	17 (40.48)	25 (59.52)	42 (100.0)	38 (40.96)	55 (59.14)	93 (100.0)

TABLE 7.7(a) : PERCEPTION OF MEMBERS ABOUT IMPROVING EMPOWERMENTS THROUGH RESERVATION IN PRIs IN THE FUTURE

LEVEL OF EDUCATION	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Illiterate	53 (34.19)	102 (65.81)	155 (100.0)	50 (39.06)	78 (60.94)	128 (100.0)	103 (36.40)	180 (63.60)	283 (100.0)
Literate	9 (31.03)	20 (68.97)	29 (100.0)	11 (35.48)	20 (64.52)	31 (100.0)	20 (33.33)	40 (66.67)	60 (100.0)
Primary	9 (37.5)	15 (62.5)	24 (100.0)	7 (53.85)	6 (46.15)	13 (100.0)	16 (43.24)	21 (56.76)	37 (100.0)
Middle	3 (42.86)	4 (57.14)	7 (100.0)	3 (42.86)	4 (57.14)	7 (100.0)	6 (42.86)	8 (57.14)	14 (100.0)
Secondary	1 (50.00)	1 (50.00)	2 (100.0)	4 (57.14)	3 (42.86)	7 (100.0)	5 (55.56)	4 (44.44)	9 (100.0)
Graduate	-	-	-	1 (100.0)	-	1 (100.0)	1 (100.0)	-	1 (100.0)
Total Sample	75 (34.56)	142 (65.44)	217 (100.0)	76 (40.64)	111 (59.36)	187 (100.0)	151 (37.38)	253 (62.62)	404 (100.0)

among them that the reservation policy will certainly bring about an improvement in their socio-economic status and empowerment. For instance, among the literates only 32 per cent felt that their condition is likely to improve, but as we look at those women who have educational level up to secondary and higher levels their percentage is as high as 66.67 per cent and 60 per cent respectively among Pradhans and the members.

OPTIONS FOR IMPROVING STATUS AND EMPOWERING WOMEN:

Lastly, we attempted to incorporate the views and suggestions of the Pradhans and members of sample PRI's about what kinds of alternative initiatives would be more appropriate in the future regarding bringing possible improvements in the socio-economic status and strengthening empowerment of women. This exercise was carried out through putting certain options in this regard in the form of questions before the respondents. Considering into account the responses of the representatives of PRI's the analysis depicted that significantly a highest proportions of women (78.67 per cent), comprising 80.60 per cent in Saharanpur and 76.42 per cent in Gorakhpur had suggested in favour of taking concrete initiatives for bringing universal awareness among women representatives of PRI's about their kinds of

TABLE 7.8 : BASIC ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR IMPROVING SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

REASONS	NUMBER OF PRADHANS AND MEMBERS								
	SAHARANPUR			GORAKHPUR			TOTAL		
	P	M	T	P	M	T	P	M	T
To Aware about their Rights and Functions	43 (84.31)	173 (79.72)	216 (80.60)	36 (85.71)	139 (74.33)	175 (76.42)	79 (84.95)	312 (77.23)	391 (78.67)
Involving local people implementation of Reservation policy for women candidates	33 (64.71)	128 (58.99)	161 (68.07)	29 (69.05)	135 (72.19)	164 (71.62)	62 (66.67)	263 (65.10)	315 (63.38)
Bringing changes in the attitude and ill feelings of Men against Women	26 (50.98)	153 (70.51)	179 (66.79)	16 (38.10)	127 (67.91)	143 (62.45)	42 (45.16)	280 (69.31)	322 (64.79)
Abolition of Traditional/ Social/ Cultural System	35 (68.63)	144 (66.36)	179 (66.79)	20 (47.62)	119 (63.64)	139 (60.70)	55 (59.14)	263 (65.10)	318 (63.98)
Changing Criteria in the Identification of Reserved PRI's/ Constitutions	34 (66.67)	115 (53.00)	149 (55.60)	26 (61.90)	107 (57.22)	133 (58.08)	60 (64.52)	222 (54.95)	282 (56.74)
Reducing Family's Work Load	21 (41.18)	122 (56.22)	143 (53.36)	19 (45.24)	111 (59.36)	130 (56.77)	40 (43.01)	233 (57.67)	273 (54.83)
Securing Compulsory Participation of Women PRI's in the meetings	37 (72.55)	143 (65.90)	180 (67.16)	30 (71.43)	120 (64.17)	150 (65.50)	67 (72.04)	263 (66.10)	330 (66.40)
Initiating more welfare Schemes for Women	33 (64.71)	143 (65.90)	176 (65.67)	24 (57.14)	106 (56.68)	130 (56.77)	57 (61.29)	249 (61.63)	306 (61.57)
Frequent holding of meeting of village and Block Panchayats	24 (47.06)	129 (59.45)	153 (57.09)	22 (52.38)	89 (47.59)	111 (48.47)	46 (49.46)	218 (53.96)	264 (53.12)
Allotting more schemes/funds to women headed PRI's	27 (52.94)	104 (47.93)	131 (48.88)	18 (42.86)	89 (47.59)	107 (46.72)	45 (48.39)	193 (47.77)	238 (47.89)
Frequently Organising Social Functions	28 (54.90)	107 (49.31)	135 (50.37)	13 (30.95)	122 (65.24)	135 (58.95)	41 (44.09)	229 (56.68)	270 (54.33)
Average	31 (60.78)	133 (61.29)	164 (61.19)	23 (54.76)	115 (61.50)	138 (60.26)	54 (58.06)	248 (61.39)	302 (60.76)
Total Sample	51 (100.0)	217 (100.0)	268 (100.0)	42 (100.0)	187 (100.0)	229 (100.0)	93 (100.0)	404 (100.0)	497 (100.0)

P = Pradhan M = Member T = Total

rights, functions and duties which are constitutionally provided under the Panchayati Raj Systems for them. However, the numbers of respondents who recommended for favour of concerned options were significantly higher from the Pradhans as compared to the members in both the sample district, but relatively at higher level in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur. A second majority of women had recommended that the participation of every women representatives of village Panchayats in the meetings of both Block Panchayats and village Panchayats should be made compulsory and mandatory (66.40 per cent), followed by the understanding of 64.79 per cent women was that the changes in the social status of women cannot be brought out unless some concrete efforts are to be undertaken for changing the attitude and ill feelings of men against women, while 63 per cent of them had suggested that at least some measures should be undertaken at the policy level by the Government for reducing the problems of social, cultural and religious backwardness in rural areas which have been limiting the scope of women in participating different activities according to their choice for last several centuries.

Since, during the period of last elections both the formation of village Panchayats and the identification of village Panchayats and its wards for considering under the reservation for women candidates was independently undertaken by the officials and the village extension workers of Block Panchayats without involving the local people. Even the village Panchayats and wards which were selected as reserved for women were known to the local people through visiting the offices of Block Panchayats only few days before the elections were proposed. Considering these facts in mind around 72 per cent women from Gorakhpur and 60 per cent from Saharanpur had suggested that the participation of local people should be maximised in the

implementation of reservation policy and the identification of reserved village Panchayats and wards for women candidates. Beside this, they were in favour of changing the criteria as adopted for the identification of reserved village Panchayats and wards for the women candidates. However, around one half of the women representatives of PRI's had recommended that providing increasing emphasis on the introduction of women related development programmes and welfare activities at village level, frequently holding the meetings of both Block Panchayats and village Panchayats, making efforts to bring reduction in the involvement of women in the household related activities, providing priority on the allocation of higher amounts of funds to the women headed Panchayats as compared to men headed Panchayats, and frequently organising of different social and cultural functions at the village Panchayats level would be the important measures for improving the socio-economic status and empowerment of women in rural areas.

Thus, over and above it seems that due to unprecedently developed social evils and cultural backwardness in rural areas coupled with little freedom provided to women by their households in general and the men family members in particular in availing the opportunities to move outside households and to participate in certain social, cultural, political and economic activities, even in the implementation of different development programmes and welfare schemes at the level of concerned village Panchayats, a significant numbers of women representatives of PRI's had hardly been benefitted in improving their socio-economic status and empowerment after representing different village Panchayats in both the districts. However, the pattern of participation in local level social functions and cultural programmes has been considerably increased for both Pradhans and members as a result, their

social status among the local people has been increased satisfactorily over the years. A little shift in the occupational pattern of employment was revealed in the sense that a sizeable proportions of both Pradhans and the members have started participating in the agricultural activities of their household through minimising their working pattern as the housewives and leaving less prestigious employment as labourers in the farms of local landlords. Also few of the women have received the opportunities to establish small shops and establishments. Little changes in the involvement of women in looking after their children, old family members, animals and related routine work of households and the participation in different matters of family affairs, including decisions making on certain issues, freedom to spend own income according to their choice was well witnessed in both the districts. The problems of existing illiteracy, lacking motivation and freedom from the part of their families and lacking awareness about their constitutional rights and duties as the representatives of village Panchayats were visualised among the most important reasons behind the lacking improvements in the socio-economic status and empowerment of women in different village Panchayats.

CHAPTER VIII

MAIN FINDINGS AND THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE women in India had enjoyed considerable respect and freedom to participate according to their choice in different social, cultural, political and religious functions and economic activities and had enjoyed a very respectable position and honour in the prevailing socio-cultural system during *vedic* period. In fact the presence of women along with their male counterpart was regarded compulsory for the success of performing various social and religious functions. However, it was after 500BC the social status of women started deteriorating due to the sudden development of various social evils. The changing socio-cultural system during the post vedic period had increasingly reduced the involvement of women in carrying out certain activities and were largely deprived the opportunities of education, participating in out-door socio-economic and cultural activities. Though the upper caste women had the higher privilege and greater freedom to participate in certain activities than the low caste women, as the consequences the former groups of women had found the opportunity to improve their socio-economic status and social status in the society at higher level than the latter groups of women.

The changes which emerged in the political social and economic pattern during the Medieval period had further marginalised and discriminated women in providing freedom for participating certain activities and were deprived of various social and economic rights and were brought out under the overall control of their male family

members. Certain social evils, such as *Sati Pratha, Pardah Pratha, Child Marriage, Postitution, Girl's Killings*, division of women based on caste, race and socio-economic status and the economic dependency of women on men gradually emerged during this period, more especially during 712 AD when the Turks entered in India. These socio-economic problems of women continued during the British rule in India. With the formation of various social and political organisations, including the Indian National Congress, in the late nineteenth century and initiating certain movements against the existing deteriorating situation and deprivation of women from various rights, by these institutions at different forms and before the British rules some legal measures were introduced by the Government for favour of improving the status of women.

After attaining independence, various measured were initiated and are still in operation for improving the socio-economic status and empowerment of women in India. The Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the constitution has the special bearing on the status and empowerment of women. The constitution guarantees equal rights and opportunities of socio-economic development and betterment of living through providing freedom of speech, personal liberty to participate in all kinds of welfare, social political and economic activities to all Indian citizens so as to establish an egalitarian and prosperous society. The political equality through the institution of adult franchise, equality in matters relating employment and appointment with any public office, and to prohibit discrimination practices on account of religion, sex, dissent and place of birth for providing certain opportunities are some of the additional constitutional provisions and measures for

providing equal chances of bringing improvements in the socio-economic status of both men and women.

Beginning from the introduction of first five-year plan in India, several development programmes and welfare schemes have also been initiated especially for developing the socio-economic status of women. At policy level, different legal reforms and resolution in the forms of acts have been introduced to achieve the favourable changes in the status and to strengthen the empowerment of women. Provisions have also been made to maximise the participation of girls in the availment of different level of educational systems with the notion that educating women would be an instrumental measure for awaring them about their rights, duties social standing and responsibilities and as prime element for maximising their participation in different development programmes, welfare schemes, socio-cultural activities and in different categories of remunerative occupations of employment. In this regard, initiatives are made to provide increasing emphasis on the expansion of girls educational institutions on a priority basis, providing subsidised educational facilities, developing educational curriculum according to the needs and requirement of girls, recruitment of women teachers and developing different social infrastructural facilities for the girls' schools.

The outcome of various constitutional measures, initiatives undertaken under the various plans and legal measures and social legislation adopted for the upliftment of women's status and achieving overall equality among men and women, has been that the participation of women in availing different level of educational system, in different categories of occupations in both public as well as private sectors, social

cultural and political activities, various development programmes and welfare activities, and availing certain amenities of life has been consistently increasing. But, in real terms, the women are still lagging far behind men in availing different facilities and participating in different activities due to widespread developed traditional form of social evils and cultural backwardness and are limiting the scope of women to participate in different activities according to their choice, even in the affairs and decision making processes on certain matters of own family and the freedom to move for participating out-door socio-economic activities which can provide them an opportunity of bringing improvements in their status. Even the rural women are visualised lacking the freedom to participate in various rural development programmes and welfare schemes, which are especially introduced with the intention of improving their socio-economic status, because of lacking freedom from the households, social restrictions to move outside, prevailing illiteracy and increasing control of male family members over the decisions of women.

Considering the experiences of unsatisfactory changes occurred in the deprivation, socio-economic status and empowerment of women in the past, it was therefore, emphasised that involving rural women with local level political institutions and ensuring their political partnership in matters related to different activities, including decision making processes for certain purposes of such institutions would be an instrumental measure for achieving this goal. With these assumptions the policy of reservation for women in the Panchayati Raj Institutions has, therefore been thought as an important approach to maximise their participation in local level political system and decision making process for the implementation of different development programmes in rural areas. Under the 73rd amendment of the

constitution of Panchayati Raj System, one third of the total seats of members and heads of village Panchayats, Block Panchayats and District Panchayats have been reserved for women candidates.

Considering the fact that the various powers are delegated to village Panchayats and the representatives of Panchayats and are politically authorised and accountable to implement various rural development programmes and welfare activities and to monitor the activities of village level government departments, public distribution system, and the maintenance of community assets it is accepted that providing an opportunity to women to represent village Panchayats will certainly help in improving the social status and strengthening empowerment of women. Beside this, increasing involvement of women in the activities of village Panchayats could possibly minimise the traditional feelings of people in term of keeping them under the subjugation of men, imposing restrictions and limiting freedom by the households against their movements outside the household and to participate in various activities.

However, the achievement level of the concerned intervention as undertaken by the Government to safeguard the interest of and provide empowerment to women would more especially depend upon the implementation pattern of reservation policy, general outlook and actual intention of elected women representatives of Panchayats towards undertaking and evolving measures in undertaking associating themselves with certain socio-economic reform activities and the extent of awareness about their rights, duties and functions and the objectives behind introducing reservation policy in their favour to different socio-economic groups of

women, their background and characteristics, prevailing attitude of families, particularly male family members in providing freedom to participate in different activities of Panchayats nature and extent of participation in different local level social, cultural, political and related activities and in the implementation of different development schemes and in decision making processes about the various activities of village Panchayats.

In this context, the present study, based on secondary data and information collected among a sample of 93 women headed village Panchayats selected from two Block Panchayats from each of the district Saharanpur in Western region and district Gorakhpur representing to eastern region of Uttar Pradesh and the primary data obtained among a sample of 497 women representative of village panchayats comprising 268 women from former district and 229 women from latter one has attempted to examine certain issues related to the implementation pattern of reservation policy and its awareness among rural women, socio-economic and political background and the personal characteristics of elected PRI's representatives, nature and extent of participation in the different activities of Panchayats and the implementation of development programmes and welfare schemes, changes and improvements experienced in the socio-economic status and empowerment by them after being elected as Pradhans and the members of PRI's, perceptions of local people and PRI's representatives about the kinds of additional measures to be initiated for improving socio-economic status and empowerment of women and various related aspects. **The main findings of the present study are as follows:-**

1. IMPLEMENTATION OF PANCHAYATI RAJ SYSTEM

Initially the Panchayati Raj Institutions were constituted in the form of Gram Sabhas in each of the villages of Uttar Pradesh in 1949. The provision was made to elect the representatives of Gram Sabhas through organizing general elections by the local people of concerned Gram Sabhas but no provision of reservation of women candidates was provided but a policy of co-opting one woman member was emphasised if no one could be elected directly. Latter the formation of a three tier system of Panchayati Raj Institutions, comprising Village Panchayats, Shetriya (Block) Panchayats and District Panchayats was undertaken during May 1994 and a total numbers of 58620 village Panchayats, 904 Shetriya Panchayats and 83 District Panchayats were constituted in the state. In the formation of village Panchayats, the old Gram Sabhas were generally converted into the village Panchayats and only in some cases the small villages comprising less than 1000 population were merged together to form a single village Panchayat.

In view of the implementation of reservation policy for women candidates the top ranking 33 per cent village Panchayats in terms of percentage share of women population were first identified as reserved for the position of women Pradhans. Accordingly, minimum of 33 per cent seats in the identified constituencies/wards in each of the village Panchayats were considered as

reserved for women candidates. It was revealed that almost all the formalities relating to the formation of Village Panchayats, identification of village Panchayats and its wards considering under the reservation for women candidates was carried out at the Block Panchayat level by its officials without involving local people. Also, the information regarding the village Panchayats and Wards which identified as reserved for women was not provided directly to the local people instead its list was placed at the noticed board of the Block Panchayats, which information could be availed mainly by the representatives of old Gram Sabhas. As a result, most of the well educated women possessing the leadership quality and having the past experience of participation in various social welfare and political activities and local level movements could not contest the election of PRI's. Even in most village Panchayats the people were highly confused till the time of election about the numbers of wards and which wards are considered for reservation of women. As a consequence, the representation of both Women Pradhans as well as women members in different districts, even at state level, is revealed significantly higher than it was recommended under the Panchayati Raj Act.

Since a majority of the women were either motivated or forced to contest the election of village Panchayats by their male family members. Therefore, the participation of women was found at very low level in canvassing for favour of their own candidature. However the discrimination against women was hardly practiced by their families in providing them an opportunity to franchise their voting rights in the election of village Panchayats; though the participation of women in voting was recorded significantly at higher extent in Gorakhpur than

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in Saharanpur and the women were not lagging far behind their male counterparts in contesting elections for both Pradhans and members and, also in casting their votes in both the districts.

Once political activities gained momentum for the election of Pradhans and members of Panchayats the village population was divided into various groups based on caste, religion and location. This has increasingly contributed to the serious problem of conflicts and clashes among various newly formed groups which has further more developed even during post-election period and is still persisting in half of the sample village Panchayats. As a consequence, traditionally well maintained socio-cultural system, mutual understanding and co-operation among different castes and social groups of rural population has tended to disintegrate.

Since an overwhelming majority of women were motivated to contest election of Panchayats by their male wards but in the meantime around three-fourth proportion of women had planned to carryout at-least some development and welfare activities after getting the opportunity to represent the village Panchayats. Though, about half of them were determined to initiate certain social welfare activities and providing social justice to the disadvantaged groups of population. However, after representing village Pradhans, they lacked the opportunity and freedom to participate in certain activities of Panchayats and the implementation of development schemes due to prevailing traditional social system and control of male family members upon the freedom of women. In fact they lack the freedom to go alone to

participate in out-door activities and the meetings of Block Panchayats which is well reflected by the fact that around 91 per cent of them were generally accompanied by their family members and relatives for making visits to the Block Panchayats.

2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND EMPOWERMENT

Very little opportunity has been provided to women to participate in educational systems, social and cultural activities and in seeking employment in both the districts. Inequalities in work-participation were highly prevalent among the women of different castes and income groups, but largely in Western region than in eastern region. Upper caste women were hardly participating in out-door functions economic activities, even in the family business and agricultural operations. Since the purda system and traditionally developed certain social and cultural evils were more prevalent among the women of upper castes than the lower castes. However, the unmarried girls had some more opportunities than the married women to participate in different activities including in the availment of education.

Women with socio-economically and politically sound family background had mainly received the advantages of reservation policy, which was introduced for women under the Panchayati Raj system. Most elected women Pradhans and members in various village Panchayats were the relatives and family members of the representatives of last Gram Sabhas and Nyay Panchayats and had sound economic background. Since the economy of both the

sample districts is based on agriculture, so a majority of both Pradhans and members belonged to the farming households, though around one-fourth of women elected as members belonged to land-less households. The economic condition of the households of Pradhans was found stronger than the case of members in both the districts, but both Pradhans and members of Saharanpur were economically more sound than their counterparts in Gorakhpur.

Illiterates, married, but young women belonging to backward castes and muslims dominated the village Panchayats in both the districts. Average size of family consisted of 6 persons and was relatively larger for Pradhans than the members. The proportions of women possessing at-least some level of educational attainment were revealed higher among Pradhans than members and the proportion of literate Pradhans as well as members were significantly higher in Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur. At least some extent of occupational mobility among both Pradhans and members was revealed after representing the village Panchayats. Since 4 per cent Pradhans and 3 per cent members who were lacking freedom to move outside households and were confined only household related in-door activities had started working on different economic activities while 6 members had left the low status occupations such as agricultural labourers and had moved to other occupations while 3 members had achieved the opportunity to acquire the entrepreneurship capability and opened the shops in nearby towns and villages.

The work participation rate of women Pradhans has been doubled while for members, it increased from 16 per cent to 18 per cent after representing Panchayats. Both, the changes in occupational structure and the work participation of women had emerged at greater extent in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur. With the significant level of shifts in occupational structure, the level of personal incomes of both Pradhans and members had also increased by 49.25 per cent and 49.63 per cent respectively, though the improvements in earnings increased sharply for Pradhans in both the districts than the members, but it increased at larger extent for both the groups of women in Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur, indicating the fact that providing an opportunity to women to represent village Panchayat has given them an opportunity and at least some degree of freedom to participate in certain economic activities as per their own choice and to improve their economic status. But, still a large segment of elected women representatives of various village Panchayats, particularly those belonging to relatively higher economic background, upper castes, large size of land holdings, and the family members of the representatives of last Gram Sabha and related local institutions, are still engaged in looking after their children, old family members and animals and are confined to carry out certain indoor household activities.

The proportions of Pradhans who were associated with different social and political organisations before representing PRI's were significantly higher than members in both the districts, but the concerned proportions of both Pradhans and members were relatively higher in Saharanpur than in

Gorakhpur, however it declined for members in former district as against of significant increase of Pradhans in both the districts and the members of Gorakhpur. In all, representing village Panchayats has provided an opportunity to 8 women to participate in local level social welfare and political activities.

3. PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITIES OF BLOCK PANCHAYATS:

Keeping into consideration the fact that merely introducing reservation policy for women in associating them in the Panchayati Raj Institutions would not be a sufficient condition in achieving improvements in their socio-economic and political status and strengthening empowerment but the equally important factors such as the extent and nature of their actual participation in the different activities, mainly in decision making processes on certain policy matters, and the kind of role they play in the meetings of Panchayats and the extent of involvement of the implementation of certain development programmes and welfare schemes at village Panchayat level would be rather more important determining factors in this regard. The study attempted to examine the nature and magnitude of involvement of women Pradhans and members in different activities, and decision making processes of Block Panchayats and village Panchayats.

The Block Panchayats were found holding the meetings of Block Development Committee, which comprises of the Pramukh, members and

Block officials of Block Panchayats and the Pradhan of village Panchayats in every alternate month. In addition to this, a number of training programmes and two crop season meetings, during the period of kharif and rabi crop seasons were also organised by the Block Panchayats during the reference period of the present study. A large number of women Pradhans of all the village Panchayats in both the districts had always been accompanied by their male family members in visiting the office of Block Panchayats both for the purpose of attending meetings and performing different official work. Irregularity in the participation of meetings of women Pradhans was highly visualised in both the districts, but relatively at larger level in Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur. Since 9 BDC meetings were organised during last year at the Block Panchayats of both districts but any Pradhan had participated in all the meetings, instead a majority of them have participated in less than four meetings, though 15 per cent of Pradhans had participated in five to seven meetings, this in Saharanpur only.

Surprisingly, a large number of Pradhans as well as members were never seen either attending the meetings or visiting block office for any purposes by the officials and the Pramukh of Block Panchayats. Even, the Pradhan were found hardly sitting for full duration of meetings, in discussions and matters related to undertaking decisions for certain policies, presenting the problems which they experienced in the implementation and supervision of different development programmes at concerned village Panchayat level and in various activities of Block Panchayats. The domination of male Pradhans was largely practiced in the affairs and functioning of meetings and even in

decision making processes and the distribution of different development schemes and allocation of funds among the village Panchayats.

The dependency of women Pradhans over their male family members was well recognised both, in performing various official work at the Block Panchayat level and in visiting different Government offices for pursuing the allotment of development projects, welfare schemes and funds and in moving of women outside their villages even for a shorter distance. In fact the male family members were reported acting on behalf of the Pradhan in performing various work at the Block Panchayat level, participation in discussion and decision making process on various matters. The performance of women representatives of PRI's in discussing various issues in the meetings, presentation of problems problems while existing in the implementation of development programmes and functioning of Panchayats was reported to be very unsatisfactory, though largely for Pradhans in Saharanpur than in Gorakhpur.

Participation of both Pradhans as well as members in the training programmes which organised for providing information and bringing awareness about their constitutional rights, duties and functions as emphasized under the Panchayati Raj Act, criteria and methodologies to be adopted for the implementation of certain development programmes and various other related subjects was also indicated to be very unsatisfactory in both the districts. Since around 43 per cent women in Saharanpur and 40 per cent women in Gorakhpur had never participated in any training programme

while only 8 per cent women from former and 7 per cent from latter district has participated in all the three training programmes which organised in each of Block Panchayats of both the districts.

By and large it is neither the problem of distance nor the problems of accessibility to roads and availability of the mode of transport facilities but the problems of traditionally developed certain social evils and cultural backwardness coupled with lack of freedom among women for moving outside households/villages for certain distances which are the main reasons behind unsatisfactory participation of women representatives of different village Panchayats in the meetings and various activities of Block Panchayats and even in the training programmes. Since the roads were passing through linking half of the sample villages and the means of transports in different forms were well accessible and were frequently available to the people for reaching the office of Block Panchayats.

Discriminating attitude of men against women in providing them the opportunity for participating in various matters of discussions and in making certain policy decisions was seen generally occur in the meetings of Block Panchayats. However, such discrimination was found largely prevailing against illiterate women and those possessing below primary level of educational attainment, but the women with above middle level of education find full opportunity and freedom to present their views in the meetings. A little more than one third of the women Pradhans were also dissatisfied with the general co-operation and attitude of Block Pramukh mainly in matters

related to listening and solving their problems, allotment of development schemes and the allocation of funds for carrying out welfare activities and performing official level functions at the Block Panchayats. Over half of the Pradhans, consisting relatively a larger proportions of them in Saharanpur than in Gorakhpur were lacking co-operation and had experience a disfavouring nature of attitude from the part of the official of Block Panchayats in providing certain information such as about the arrival of new schemes and projects at the Block Panchayats for implementing in different villages, allotment of development projects and releasing funds in favour of their village Panchayats and providing guidelines for the implementation of certain development programmes etc.

The perceptions of a sizeable proportion of the women Pradhans were also that the men Pradhans largely adopt a discriminatory approach against them while seeking their assistance for performing certain official work at the Block Panchayat level and providing support in the allotment of different development programmes for initiating in their concerned village Panchayats. Lacking co-ordination and co-operation among the women Pradhans of different village Panchayats in pursuing certain common issues collectively before the meetings of Block Panchayats was highly prevailing in both the districts. A very small proportions of women meet each others outside the meetings of Block Panchayats for discussing about certain matters related to their households and the type of development programmes they are implementing in their village Panchayats.

4. PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITIES OF VILLAGE PANCHAYATS:

Significant levels of differences were persisting in the pattern and frequencies of holdings of meeting for different purposes among the sample village Panchayats of both the districts. Since every village Panchayat had organised atleast one meeting for the purpose of the identification of beneficiaries, selection of site or work and related formalities for the implementation of Jawahar Rojgar Yojana. Meetings were also held for matters and discussing issues related to IRDP, Indira Avas Yojana, construction of Panchayat Bhavan and school buildings, distribution of hand pumps and old age pension and assessing the financial situation of village Panchayats. However, the village Panchayats of Gorakhpur were more punctual in holding the meetings regularly for different purposes than the village Panchayats of Saharanpur. Also, the number and frequency of meetings held in the Panchayats of former district were relatively higher than the latter one. The women Pradhans were found regularly attending the meetings along with their male family members but the irregularities and absenteeism in the participation of women among general public and the women members of Panchayats was highly recognised in both the districts, though it was largely reflected in Saharanpur than in Gorakhpur. The domination of men participants among the general public and the members of PRI's was largely visualised in the meetings organised for different purposes in both the districts. Since the average participation rate of women in the meetings was estimated to be only 3.21 per cent as against 21.64 per men

and it was almost equal for both the sexes in both the districts. But the full attendance of PRI members, either the case of men or women, was never witnessed in any of the meetings while the proportions of both men and women members attending meetings were found significantly higher in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur. The women members of different PRI's were participating in the meetings only for the purpose of the identification of beneficiaries which are proposed to be covered under different welfare programmes and the selection of locations for the implementation of certain rural employment oriented programmes. Both the men and women members of PRI's, mainly comprising of opposition group of Pradhan, were showing little interest in associating themselves in the different activities and meetings of the village Panchayats.

The domination of male family members of women Pradhans was highly visualised in the different activities of Panchayats including the matters related to making decision for the identification of beneficiaries for covering under different development programmes and the discussions in the meetings of Panchayats in both the districts but largely in Saharanpur than in Gorakhpur, since around one third of women representatives of PRI's had expressed the views that the decisions of various matters of functioning the activities of Panchayats are independently undertaken by the husbands and fathers of women Pradhans while only 21.43 per cent of women Pradhans in Gorakhpur were found independently involved in performing the various activities of the concerned village Panchayats. The domination of male members in the meetings and undertaking certain activities of panchayat was

however found at larger extent in the village Panchayats comprising of Gorakhpur (31 per cent) than the Saharanpur (28 per cent).

The problem of groupism which was basically developed according to caste, religion and political affiliation with different parties before the election of Panchayts was experienced causing serious problems in the successfully functioning of certain numbers of village Panchayats in both the districts. The opposition groups of elected Pradhans were unnecessarily raising objections even on deciding for carrying out certain activities and the initiation of different development programmes. However, such problems were largely prevailing in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur. The male participants among the general people were the second major groups of problem creator in the successful functioning of different activities of village Panchayts in both the districts.

The presentation of matters related to the identification of beneficiaries and locations for covering under the various development programmes before the meetings and deciding for initiating different employment oriented programmes have been experienced as the main subjects for developing disputes among the participants and generating problems in the meetings, though the nature of problems in over half of the village Panchayats were revealed as short term phenomena. Unprecedentedly increasing involvement and interference of male family members of women Pradhans over the activities of village Panchayats and providing little importance to consider the co-operation and maximise the participation of opposition groups of PRIs' members and the socially well honoured local people in different activities of

Panchayats and the initiation of certain development programmes and welfare activities were observed some of the important factors which were directly motivating the people towards creating certain unwanted problems in the functioning of Panchayats and its activities.

Absenteeism of Co-ordination and co-operation among the Pradhans and members in matters related to carrying out different activities of Panchayats, deciding for implementation of certain development, and for covering beneficiaries among different castes and religions under these programmes, development programmes and welfare schemes was significantly reflecting in various village Panchayats of both the districts. Almost the Pradhans were found mainly associating and taking the help of few members of PRI's mainly from their supporting groups, in undertaking certain activities of Panchayats. As the consequences a little over than one fourth of men members and 18 per cent women members found participating in different activities of Panchayats; though the respective percentage of women members were in Gorakhpur was relatively higher (21 per cent) than the case of Sharanpur (16 per cent) but it was almost similar for men members among both the districts.

5. PARTICIPATION IN INITIATING DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND SOCIAL ACTIVITIES:

A majority of village Panchayats were involved in the implementation of Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, IRDP, Indira Avas Yojana and the construction of Primary School buildings and the expansion of various social infrastructural

facilities. The Jawahar Rojgar Yojana was implemented by each of the sample village Panchayats while the another two major programmes, IAY and IRDP were implemented respectively by 57 per cent and 69 per cent of the village Panchayats.

The financial situation of the village Panchayats was very disappointing in the sense that per village Panchayat average amounts of finances received for the implementation of different development programmes and the functioning of the activities of Panchayats from different sources during last year was estimated to be only around Rs.60 thousand, though it was significantly higher for Gorakhpur than the Sharanpur. The finances received for the implementation of JRY had the major contribution of 60 per cent in the incomes of village Panchayats in Gorakhpur while in Saharanpur a highest amount of finances were received for the implementation of IAY (41 per cent) followed by IRDP (27 per cent). It revealed that the village Panchayats were making little efforts for getting finances and allotment of development programmes and certain welfare schemes from the different department of Government but they were mostly depending upon the Block Panchayats in this regard. The lack of awareness and information about the procedure and the methodology to be adopted for applying in favour of different development schemes from different funding agencies and department and lack of mobility outside villages were found to be factors restricting the participation of women PRI's in approaching for and initiating efforts to get the allotment of certain development schemes from different agencies. In fact, those were visiting different agencies along with their male family members in this regards were

facing various kinds of problems both in the allotment of schemes and the release of funds. Since around 35 per cent Pradhans in Gorakhpur and 24 per cent Pradhans in Saharanpur reported that the official of different Government departments unnecessarily take a long time in the allotment of schemes and funds while 17 per cent Pradhans in former and 15 per cent in latter districts were getting relatively less amounts of funds than the sanctioned amounts for different programmes.

Lack of participation of women in various stages of the implementation and supervision of development programmes was well recognised in a majority of village Panchayats (63 per cent) while only 7 per cent were regularly involved and remaining 30 per cent were occasionally participating in the development activities. However, the proportion of women engaged in different development activities, both regularly and casually together, were relatively higher in Gorakhpur (43 per cent) than in Saharanpur (31 per cent). All the activities related to the implementation of various development programmes were performed by their male family members. In fact the women who were casually involved in the various stages of implementation and supervision of development schemes were also accompanied by their male family members.

On the whole the level of educational attainment among women was positively influencing their nature of participation and the performance in different stages of implementation of various development programmes. Since the participation rate of women with no education was found around 25 per cent and it consistently increased with the increase of every additional

level of educational attainment of women and reached as high as 83 for women with above secondary level of education. However, the participation of women Pradhans, both with no education and above secondary level of education was found significantly higher in Saharanpur than in Gorakhpur. Also the domination of male family members of Pradhans in performing the various activities of Panchayats and the different stages of the implementation of various development programmes on behalf of Pradhans was further visualised to a larger extent in those village Panchayats which were headed by women with no education and had below primary level of education than in the Panchayats headed by women with above middle level of education.

Overall participation of women representatives of different village Panchayats in the meetings and activities of Block Panchayats, preparation of proposal for initiating certain development schemes and making visits to different departments of Government, for getting the allotment of these schemes, different activities of village Panchayats, deciding for the identification of beneficiaries for covering under different programmes, decision making process on various of matters of Panchayats and the participation in different stages of implementation, supervision and monitoring work progress of different development programmes was significantly better in district Gorakhpur as compared to district Saharanpur.

Overburden and excessive involvement in the household related activities was cited as the prime reason behind the lack of participation of a majority of

women representatives of PRI's, in the implementation of development activities though the proportion of such women was significantly higher in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur. Also, a sizeable proportion of them had the understanding that the men segment either belonging to their families or the members of PRI", can perform the implementation and supervision part of different activities more successfully than the women. Beside this, around half of the women in both the districts were lacking freedom from their families to participate in different stages of the implementation of various development programmes.

The women Pradhans were found facing variety of problems from the representatives of PRI's, members of old Gram Sabhas and the general public of concerned village Panchayats in the successful implementation of different development programmes. The non-cooperative attitude of PRI's representatives was mainly visualised in decision making processes for the purpose of implementation of different programmes of different wards and the people to be identified for eligibility under different programmes in both the districts but relatively at higher extent in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur. The general public, mainly among the opposition group of Pradhans, was seen to create unnecessary problems beginning from the stages of the initiation of the development schemes to the stages of its implementation and supervision. The prevailing problems of castism, communalism, political interest and illiteracy among a large segment of population were the main factors behind lacking co-operation of local people in successful

implementation of different development programmes in most of the village Panchayats of both the districts.

Examining about the nature of participation of general public in performing of and the kinds of benefits which were derived by the local people through the implementation of various rural development programmes in different village Panchayats, it revealed that local people were hardly taking any interest in getting engaged in various employment oriented programmes because the provision of remuneration to be given as wages to the beneficiaries under the implementation of these programmes were fixed relatively much lower as compared to the prevailing wage rates for carrying out other non-agricultural activities in local areas.

In all, the women were found to be participating in the different development programmes along with their male counterparts but the rate of participation of women as the beneficiaries was comparatively lower than men, but these differences were relatively at lower level in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur, mainly those were participating in JRY and were covered under the IAY. But the per village Panchayat average mandays employment generated for women were significantly higher in Gorakhpur than in Sharanpur but it was significantly higher for men than the women in both the districts, because the numbers of eligible women headed households were relatively less than men headed households for covering under different development programmes. Otherwise in JRY, aimed at providing employment opportunities to rural

poors, the participation of women was witnessed around double as compared to work-participation rate of women of both regional and district level.

The participation of both Pradhans and members was very appreciable in village level functions, social ceremonies and cultural programmes, but they were found least bothering to participate on the occasions of occurring social disputes and conflicts among the local people. But the participation of women members was found more satisfactory than the case of women Pradhans in attending all the local ceremonies and functions in both the districts. Both Pradhans and members had attained significant social respects and honorable status among different segment of population, particularly by male population while attending the local activities.

6. CHANGES IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND EMPOWERMENT:

A large number of both Pradhans and members availed a significant opportunity and freedom from their families to participate in local level social functions, cultural programmes and related activities in both the districts but at higher level in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur after representing village Panchayats. However, the pattern of availing respect and honour from local people in attending these activities was found mainly depending upon the kind of reputation they have so far achieved in performing certain welfare and development activities and in bringing efforts to improve the socio-economic condition of different segments of people in concerned village Panchayats. In

all around one third of the women representatives comprising significantly larger ratio in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur and also, higher among women members than the women Pradhans, have availed the opportunity to improve their social status as a result of getting elected as the representatives of village Panchayats.

A marginal proportion of both Pradhans and members, though largely in Gorakhpur than in Saharanpur, have received the freedom of moving outside household to participate in the family's business, mainly in agricultural activities, moving from low status occupations of employment to better status and higher remunerative occupations and to strengthen entrepreneurship capabilities so as to establish small shops and establishments in their villages. With the increase of work-participation rate and significant shifts in the occupational structure the average income of both members and Pradhans have consequently increased in both the districts but to greater extent in Gorakhpur than the Saharanpur.

However, no significant changes in performing the routine of work related to household affairs such as looking after the children, old family members and animals, cooking food and washing clothes were revealed in the cases of a overwhelming majority of women representatives of PRI's after representing village Panchayats. However those who experienced at least some level of change were significantly higher in Sahranpur than in Gorakhpur. The marginalisation and discrimination against women, in terms of imposing certain restrictions against their participation in various activities, both inside

and outside household, and providing them an opportunity to participate in availing certain facilities, which directly or indirectly help in bringing enhancing improvements in socio-economic status was increasingly practiced by the families of around half of Pradhans as well as members. However, extremely greater restrictions against the women representatives of different village Panchayats were imposed by their families in providing freedom to participate in local level political movements and agitation followed by attending disputed matters and conflicts among the local people and visiting different Government offices, including the Block Panchayats. The deeprooted social evils and cultural backwardness in rural areas was the most dominating factor, which was restricting, and limiting the scope of around 86 per cent women to participate in various out door activities. While the prevailing illiteracy and conservative attitude of their family members was the second major factor in this regard in both the districts. But the extent of freedom provided to women for participating in different activities in Gorakhpur was at greater level than in Saharanpur.

Over and above around half of the women representatives of different village Panchayats had experienced at least some degree of changes as occurred in their social status, mainly through participating at local level social and cultural programmes and among the women, though such category of women were significantly higher among Pradhans than the members in both the districts. Even this improvement was negligible at household level for over 80 per cent of women. A very little improvement was reflected in the economic status of women after representing Panchayats. However, the perceptions of

the highest proportions of Pradhans was that they enjoyed a greater degree of respect and improved social status among different segments of people in relatively larger size of local institutions such as Block Panchayats and Nyay Panchayats as compared to smaller size of institutions such as village Panchayats and at household level. This gives an impression that due to certain kinds of limitations imposed by rural traditional socio-cultural systems against women they lack the opportunity and freedom to participate openly and independently according to their choice in several matters of different activities and even exposing their intelligence and arts of view on certain issues before the participants belonging to their families or the villagers dominating in smaller size of institutions such as village Panchayats. However, such limitations against women were seen narrowing down in larger size of institutions whose meetings are represented by the people of different village Panchayats rather than their family members and the villagers.

Beside this, the perceptions of a highest proportions of women representatives of PRI's were that the excessive domination of men and rich segment of people in every activities, meetings, decision making processes in performing different social economic and welfare activities at the level of both Block Panchayats and village Panchayats was mainly responsible factor behind providing lesser extent of opportunities to them in participating certain activities and matters. Consequently they lack possible improvements in their socio-economic status. Lacking motivation from the part of households to involve them in different activities and the prevailing illiteracy were cited as the another important factor by a second majority of respondents, mainly

women members, which were directly limiting the possibilities of bringing improvements in their social-economic status.

The perceptions and understanding of a high majority of both Pradhans and members was that merely introducing reservation policy for favour of women in Panchayats would not be a sufficient condition for achieving desired changes in the socio-economic status of women. However as we move up from the perceptions of illiterate to the different level of educated women we find that higher the educational attainment greater is the understanding among them that reservation policy will certainly bring about an improvements in their socio-economic status and empowerment.

Lastly, an overwhelming majority of the representatives of different village Panchayats had suggested in favour of taking concrete initiatives for bringing awareness among women about their rights, duties and functions which are recommended under the Panchayati Raj System. Suggestions such as making suitable changes in the criteria fixed for the purpose of the identification of reserved village Panchayats and wards for women candidates, maximising the participation of local people in the implementation of reservation policy for women, bringing changes in the attitude and feelings of men against women, making increasing efforts for mitigating persisting social evils and backward cultural systems, and the introduction of increasing numbers of women related development programmes with ensuring the participation of women in various activities and making provisions for the allotment of more schemes and funds for women headed

village Panchayats were also forwarded by both Pradhans and members of PRI's for providing due considerations as an additional alternative options for achieving the goal of bringing desired improvements in socio-economic status and empowerment of women in rural areas.

7. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

In a emerging situation of unprecedently developed certain social evils and cultural backwards, which largely generating the marginalisation and discriminatory attitudes of men against women in providing adequate level of freedom to them to participate in different activities and availing the opportunities of various facilities so as to bring desirable changes in their socio-economic status it seems that merely introduction of reservation policy for women in different tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions will not be a sufficient condition for achieving improvements in socio-economic status and empowerment of women. In addition to this, the present study had also visualised that there were several other related fundamental elements and factors which were equally determining the scope for bringing changes in the status of women. **On the basis of the findings of present study we may try to offer a few suggestions which may be incorporated as the policy measures in the future for achieving desirable improvements in the status and empowerment of women in rural areas.**

- (I) Participation of local people in the identification of village Panchayats and its wards as reserved for women candidates should be ensured by the official of Block Panchayats and adequate period should be provided for nomination of candidature for contesting election. In this way the problems of inconsistencies and improper practices as adopted in the identification of reserved village Panchayats and wards and lacking of information among local people before the proposed of election, as revealed during the last election period, could be minimised to a certain extent. It will certainly provide an opportunity to women possessing better educational attainments, leadership quality, the past experiences of participation in carrying out certain social welfare and political activities and those actually wanting to represent the village Panchayats.

- (II) The level of educational attainment among the representatives of Panchayats was revealed playing a crucial role in influencing their nature and extent of participation in different activities of both Block Panchayats and village Panchayats, including issues related to the decision making processes for various matters, successful

implementation and independent supervising of development programmes and attending various local level socio-cultural and political activities. In this light it may be suggested that the provision should be made to fix at least some educational qualification for the candidates willing to contest the election for both Pradhans and members of the village Panchayats.

- (iii) It seems necessary to provide increasing emphasis on holding the meetings of both village Panchayats and Block Panchayats with ensuring and encouraging the participation of every woman representative of village Panchayats in different activities of Panchayats, issues of discussions and presenting views on taking policy decisions on certain matters so as to promote and enhance the leadership quality, independency culture and self confidence among women such that they can perform better in men dominated meetings of the Panchayats.

- (iv) Frequently organising of training programmes and workshops mainly for bringing awareness about the constitutional rights, functions and duties as provided to PRI's representatives under the Panchayati Raj System, educating about the concept and relevance

of Panchayati Raj, the nature of Indian democracy and constitutional policies and programmes for women, methodology to be adopted for successful implementation of different development programmes and to maximise the local participation and providing information about the nature of development schemes to be allotted for implementation from different funding agencies and Government departments etc. are expected would be successful measure for increasing the real partnership and imparting self confidence among them in undertaking and performing certain development programmes, welfare activities and several other activities of village Panchayats more successfully as the consequences in bringing desirable improvements in their socio-economic status and improvement.

- (v) Participation of women representatives of PRI's in the meetings of Block Panchayats and village Panchayats should be made mandatory. Constitutional provision should also be made to associate every members of village Panchayats in the different stages of implementation of different development programmes and welfare schemes and the involvement of the family members of women Pradhans in acting as Pradhan in the meetings and

undertaking decisions on certain matters of Panchayats and performing development activities should be completely banned.

- (vi) Since due to prevailing groupism in different village Panchayats the participants among general public were revealed un-necessarily create certain problems in properly functioning of Panchayats while the most women members were hardly participating in the meetings. So the participation of women members in different meetings should be made compulsory. And in the meetings to be organised for purposes of the identification of beneficiaries for covering under various schemes and undertaking certain policy decisions of village Panchayats the participation should be limited for Pradhans and the members of concerned village only.
- (vii) Provision of providing increasing emphasis on more women related welfare schemes and development programmes could be an important measure for strengthening the involvement and to divert the increasing number of women and their working time in performing these activities and to minimise their partnership in household related indoor activities. This initiative will certainly maximise the participation of women in different out door social,

economic and related activities, decision making matters and several affairs of households including, bringing desired level of changes in socio-economic status and empowerment among both, general women and the representatives of village Panchayats.

- (viii) Initiatives towards the formation of different social institutions such as Mahilla Mangal Dal, Mahila Manch and Mahila Welfare Societies with maximising the association of women with these institutions, allotment of adequate funds for undertaking various women related welfare programmes, frequently organising the meetings on routine basis and ensuring the participation of women in different activities, would be the additional foremost options for improving and strengthening the socio-economic status and empowerment of women in rural areas.

In all, the prevailing certain cultural barriers and backward social systems are limiting the real participation of women in different activities of Block Panchayats and village Panchayats and the decision making process of certain policy matters, including deciding for initiation and implementation of different development programmes and welfare activities. In fact, the male family members of women Pradhan were revealed performing the function of Pradhans in undertaking visit to different departments of Government various

activities of Panchayats, including in matters related to decision making processes and the different stages of implementation and supervision of development schemes in most of the village Panchayat levels.

A marginal level of improvements in the socio-economic status of women was reflected for a small categories of both Pradhans and members, particularly those possessing relatively better educational attainments and were not motivated to contest the election of village Panchayats by their family members. Also, a little shift in the occupational pattern of employment, participation in different economic activities, earnings and overall changes in the socio-economic status and empowerment of the women representatives of different villages was visualised in both the districts but largely in Gorakhpur as compared to Saharanpur. In fact some of the women have availed the opportunity to develop entrepreneurship capability to establish the small shops and related establishments and few of the women have left working as agricultural labourers and to engage with low status occupations and indoor activities of households as a result of receiving significant freedom from their families after representing the village Panchayats. A majority women representatives in both the districts, but largely in Gorakhpur and Saharanpur had improved a considerable social standing through attending local level social, cultural and religious functions and political activities. The perceptions of a significant proportion of both Pradhans and members were that the introduction of reservation policy in favour of women under the Panchayati Raj System will certainly prove as a successful intervention of Government for bringing improvements in socio-economic status and

empowerment of women in rural areas in the near future provided that some concrete efforts are to be undertaken for changing the attitude and ill feelings of men and traditional social systems which are disfavouring and limiting the freedom of women for participating in certain activities. Though, the literate women, particularly those possessing atleast some level of educational attainments had the greater expectations and were pessimistic than the illiterate women that the introduced reservation policy for women under the Panchayati Raj System would be a successful attempt for providing an opportunity to women in bringing significant improvement in their socio-economic status and empowerment and getting out from the traditionally developed backward social systems and the cultural evils which restricting the opportunities of women to participate in different activities as per their choice.

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